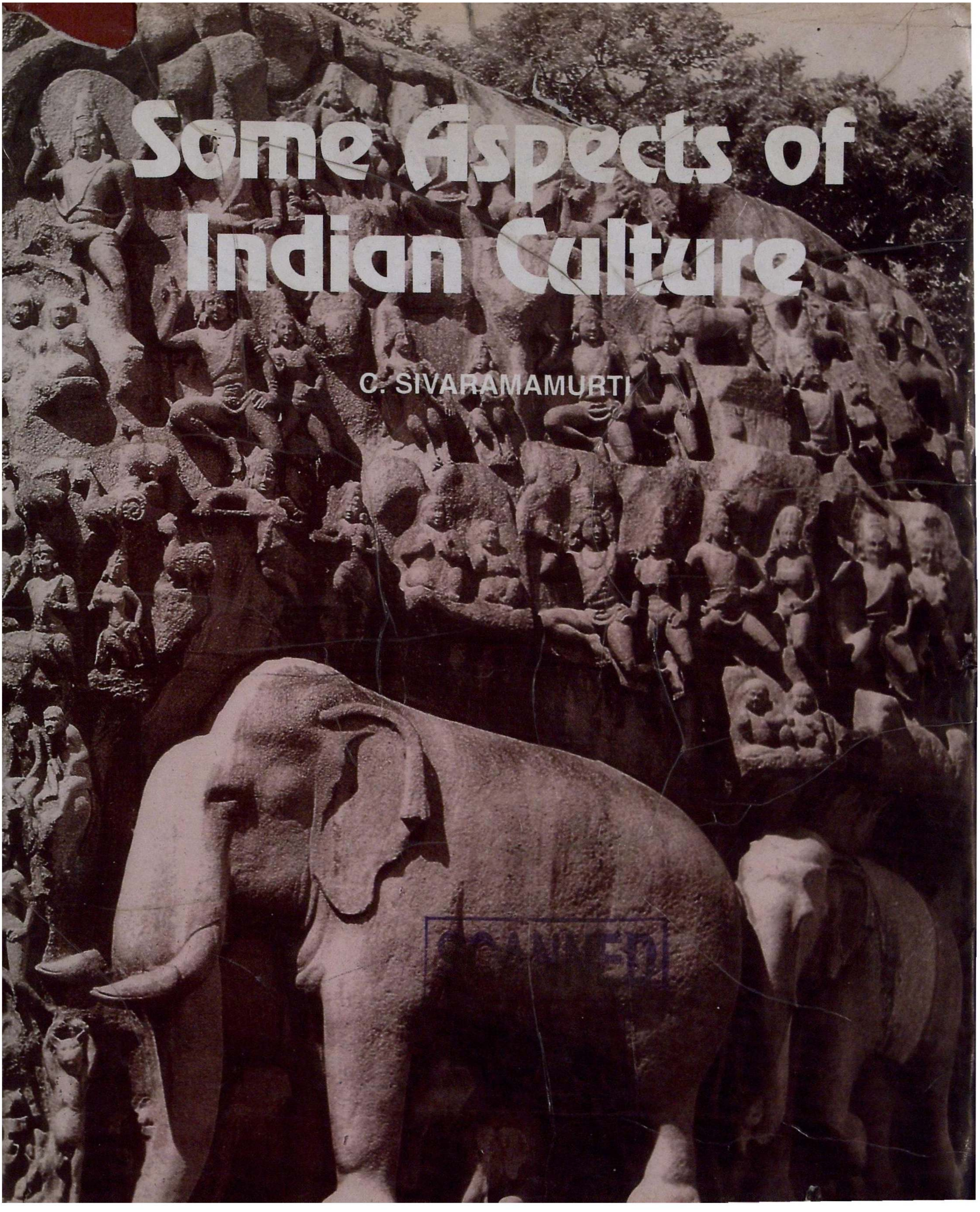
Some Aspects of Indian Culture

C. SIVARAMAMURTI



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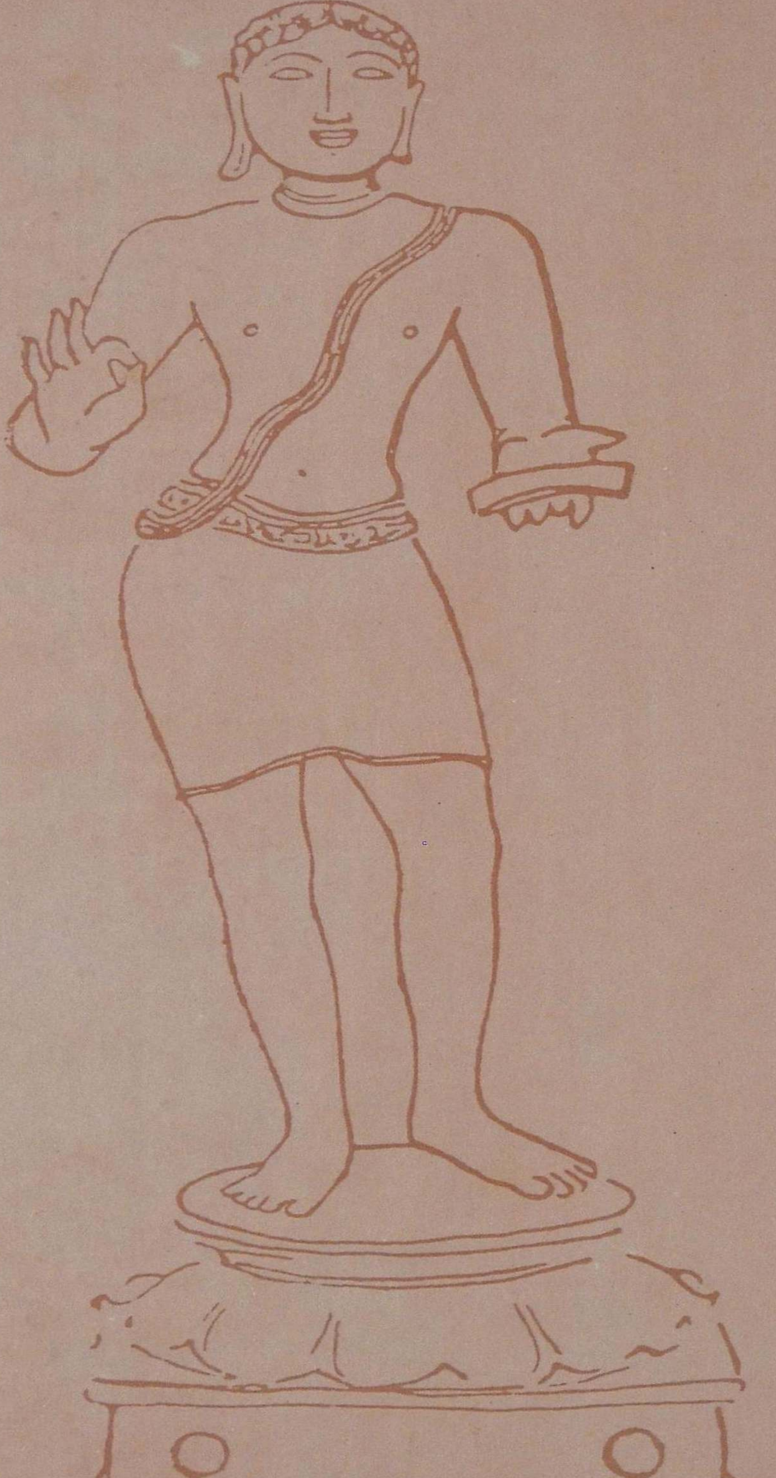

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C. SIVARAMAMURTI

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To

SRI RAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE

with affection and esteem

|| FOREWORD ||

'Atha Dharm-Artha-phalaya Rajyaya Namah'
Honour the State, the Root of Law and Weal

The above invocation (with the Sanskrit in Nagari characters) is carved on the red-stone arch over one of the main portals of the South Block in the Central Secretariat of the Government of India in New Delhi, and this beautiful invocation (which has been given also with a Persian rendering) is fully in the spirit of Indian Civilisation and Culture. Sir Edward Luytens, the architect of the noble buildings in New Delhi, sought to give to the newly restored capital city of a United India its proper Indian atmosphere, not only by using the beautiful red sandstone with amber spots and the brown sandstone which are so characteristic of the area, but also by bringing in an Indian feel about it in architectural forms, showing a very highly artistic blending of the traditional and the innovational; and, "whether by accident or by design", either through some sort of intuition or through careful thinking, this great inscription from the ancient Sanskrit on one of the main entrances now proclaims the basic ideology of Indian Thought and Civilisation in the Central Offices of India's National Government, stressing upon the importance of *Dharma* as well as of *Artha*.

The *Purushártha*, the *Summum Bonum of Man's Life*, according to the ancient Indian conception, is the realisation of these four objects: *Dharma* or the Righteous Life, *Artha* or the Good Things of Life, *Káma* or the Enjoyment of Life, and finally as the Ultimate Goal, *Móksha* or Liberation from life. The Hindu View and Philosophy of Life, the Hindu Ordering and Way of Life and the Hindu Expression and sublimation of life, are all centered round these four main aims—the *Chatur-Varga*. And the pivot of all these is the first of these four ideals—viz. *Dharma*. This is a very eloquent word, but it may be translated as 'Righteousness', or 'the Right Way of Life'. *Dharma*, from the root *dhṛ*, 'to hold', really means 'the inherent principle which holds a thing in its own proper form, the Holder', or 'Sustainer of all Objects and Ideas in the universe'. It also means 'the Eternal Law'—called also *Ṛta (Rita)* in Sanskrit—which is operating in the Universe. If a man is true to this Eternal Law and does not abandon it, then he has no difficulty in performing his function in life properly. *Dharma* also means, in a narrow sense, 'Man-made Laws for the ordering of our social and public life—to regulate the relations between Man and Man'. It thus forms the basis of man's endeavour to achieve *Artha*, that is to acquire the wherewithal of life, and everything else that is required and can be obtained through righteous action. The happiness in life, particularly the happiness of a life of love and mutual service as in matrimony, viz. *Káma*, is the third objective of life. The inclusion of *Artha* and *Káma* as two of the Four Objectives of Life shows that the Hindu ideal was not life-negating or life-denying—it accepted life with all its joys and sorrows as something which man should not shun, but should try to live through and to sublimate to something higher. After this, *Dharma* as the Basis, and after *Artha* and *Káma* as natural fulfilments of the human quest for mundane happiness, one is to prepare for

Móksha or Liberation, or 'Final Release from the bonds of life'. Thinking of the Ultimate Reality when one abandons the ephemeralness and the futility of *Dharma, Artha* and *Káma* and seeks to enter into the Bliss of Communion with the Supreme, then that is 'the Abode of the Great Bliss of Release' (*pér-ińpa-vit'u-* as the ancient Tamil Poetess Auvaiyar has described it).

This concept of the *Chatur-Varga* or *Purushártha* became an All-India one, and in some of the Oldest Tamil poetry as in the *Kural* of Tiruvalluvar (early centuries A.D.) we have a most beautiful treatment of the first three *Vargas*—viz. *Dharma, Artha* and *Káma*, in Old Tamil *Aŕam, Porul'* and *Ińpam*. The *Kural* does not discuss *Móksha*, which is called *Vít'u* in Tamil. But the great Saiva and Vaishnava sages and saints of Tamizhakam—the *Nayanmars* and the *Azhvárs*, have given a most spiritual-mystic and highly poetical treatment of *Móksha* in the magnificent corpus of Saiva and Vaishnava devotional poetry—the *Téváram* and the *Nál-áyira-p-pirapantam.*

Sri C. Sivaramamurti is one of our most profound scholars of Indian Civilization, and as a Senior Officer of the Archaeological Survey of India, and as the Director of the National Museum, Janpath, New Delhi, Indian Archaeology, Indian Art and Indian Lore of all kinds have been his special subjects of investigation for a whole life. I need to try to speak specially on his life's work in this line. He combines technical knowledge of Archaeology and Museology with a very deep and extensive knowledge of Sanskrit Literature and Sanskrit Thought and Culture. He has further a passionate interest in both the inner meaning and the outer forms of Hindu life and Hindu ways. His magisterial control over facts renders his writings on the subject so valuable and so much sought after by specialists and scholars. And in addition to all this, he has the soul of an artist who can all wield the pencil, the pen and the brush, to give most faithful renderings in pen-and-ink from ancient Indian art and epigraphy, never missing their inner beauty.

It is for us, who have been admiring his work for a long number of years, and profiting from it, a matter for congratulation that on the eve of his retirement, after years of service in the Archaeological Department, and in the National Museum, New Delhi he could give us this book. He has given it a modest title—'Some Aspects of Indian Culture'. It is well illustrated, with the fine photographs of sculpture and painting, not only from the Hindu Art of India but also of Greater India—of Indo-China and Indonesia—and with a number of beautiful line-drawings from his own pencil. This work is also replete with adequate quotations from Sanskrit literature, both from actual classical texts and from inscriptions. And what is more to the point—it deals with the expression of the great concepts of *Dharma, Artha, Káma* and *Móksha* in Indian Literature, Indian Art and Indian Life. The work is really a great Anthology of Art and Literature of Ancient India, treating (or, as one may say, glorifying) life as an expression of *Dharma* in its various aspects or manifestations.

Sri Sivaramamurti in his Introduction discusses *Dharma* as the Basis of Life both terrestrial and spiritual. The world around us is, according to the Old Indian idea, infused with the spirit of *Dharma,* which also transcends it. Man's life, according to this ideal, is (or rather should be considered to be) an emanation of *Dharma*—not only in his moral life and his conception of the Divinity, and his creation of the various gods and goddesses, but also in his social virtues and social institutions, and in his daily life and avocations. It is *Dharma* which supplies for the Indian Man his pattern of life, and his actions and thoughts are all an expression as well as a striving for and a glorification of *Dharma.*

Sri Sivaramamurti has divided his work into some 20 Sections. He has first of all discussed the place which Outer Nature holds in *Dharma*-centered life of Ancient India—how the great Mountains (particulary the Himalaya) and the great Rivers and the Holy Places (*tírthas*) by the Rivers, declare the glory of the working of *Dharma* in the Universe, and how they are intimately connected with the life of the Gods which is but their sport—the Gods whom the

people venerate and who are also the great examplars for Man to guide them to lead the good life. Then he takes up the place of the daily Religious Ritual and of the Moral Virtues and Ideals of Life, and how Indian Art fully reflects these aspects of *Dharma* in practice. Some of the most significant Emblems and Symbols of religion, and some of guiding Notions about the Nature of the Gods as Helpers of all living creatures, are discussed. The main idea of a Great Synthesis of Faiths and Cults; of the ideal of Kingship in Hindu India; of the Temple and the Book as the centres of cultural life and of thought; the *Sanskára*s or family ceremonials and cults, are explained, with literary quotations and plastic representations. In his section on "Love Sublime", the author has given a brief expose of Love as a spiritual attribute of Man, drawing him eternally upwards from the sensual and the sensuous to the Mystic Union with the Divinity.

This is quite a fine and useful book, and it forms a very pleasant introduction to Hindu thought and culture and notions and life in a way which few books can do, thanks particularly to the convincing and authoritative quotations from the Sanskrit, and the mass of over 150 illustrations, full page as well as text pictures. And the value of the work is enhanced by an exhaustive Bibliography.

I have no doubt that the book will fulfil a great demand for a comprehensive work of this kind. And I can only wish this, for ourselves and our people: May the author live to his hundredth year, in full possession of his mental and physical powers, so that he might benefit the scholarly world as well as the lay public by more contributions of this kind from his mature knowledge, his great treasure-house of original ideas, and his vision and imagination to see things in their historic sequence and in their entirety.

"Sudharma",
16, Hindustan Park,
Calcutta.
Dípávalí Day,
October 21, 1968.

SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI
National Professor of India in Humanities,
Emeritus Professor of Comparative Philology
in the University of Calcutta.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Nearly fifteen years ago the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Rama Prasad Mookerjee, a great friend of museums and a connoisseur of Indian Art and Culture, suggested to Swami Vijayananda of the Bharat Sevashram Sangha, who was proposing an exhibition of Indian Culture, to discuss this with me at the Indian Museum. Swami Vijayananda was so enthusiastic about a vivid representation through photos of the essentials of Indian Culture that I planned out a scheme of arrangement of ideas. Swamiji wanted a book to be prepared to be issued along with the inauguration of the exhibition and that accounts for the origin of this book.

The exhibition itself was postponed indefinitely for reasons beyond anyone's control but it was felt by the Swamiji that the book could be brought out. Its publication was, however, delayed for one reason or the other till finally Dr. Grace Morley and the Publications Committee of the National Museum took it up for printing it as a Museum publication. The photos collected by Swami Vijyananda for illustrating the book were kindly made available by him. Some more were also collected and blocks were prepared. I cannot adequately thank Swamiji for this kind help. For the kind courtesy of the use of photographs, the Archaelogical Survey of India, the National Museum, the Madras Government Museum, the Photo Division of the Government of India, the British Museum, London and the Department of Archaeology of Indonesia have my best thanks. I am indebted to my friend and classmate Sri Y. G. Duraiswami for allowing me the use of one of his paintings as an illustration. Dr. Morley very kindly read through the book and offered several valuable suggestions that have enhanced the value of the book. Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterji, who has watched my literary career from my early years with the utmost kindness and affection, has showered his blessings on me through his kind and erudite Foreword for this book, and I am unable to find words to thank him adequately. Dr. A. M. D'Rozario and Sri T. S. Krishnamurti, Joint Secretary and Deputy Secretary respectively, Ministry of Education, and Sri V. P. Agnihotri, then in the Ministry of Education and now Director of Estates, Government of India, kindly encouraged the speedy publication of this book and have my best thanks. Sri T. N. Bahel and Sri R. Ramaswamy, Chief Controller and Controller of Printing respectively, kindly fixed up the press and made possible the production of this book. Dr. P. Banerjee was responsible for all that is necessary to speed up the process of publication. Sri B. S. Bist planned the lay-out and the Job Press have done their best to produce the book in a pleasing form. I am beholden to all of them. The index for this was prepared at short notice by Sri G. D. Khullar to whom I offer my thanks.

C. SIVARAMAMURTI

Oct. 1968

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81. Gold coin of Kumaragupta I, Gupta, 5th century A. D., reverse showing Karttikeya nimbate seated on peacock with spear in left hand (*Saktidhara*) and sprinkling incense on altar, legend, *Mahaendrakumarah;* Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dyn., Pl. XV, 5.

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85. Gold coin of Narendraditya, unidentified Gupta type, 7th century A. D., King nimbate seated on throne with head to left, attended by a lady on either side, legend above *Yama,* beneath couch letter *Dha,* reverse showing goddess Lakshmi nimbate standing, holding lotus in right hand and with lotuses about her and a swan near her feet, legend *Sri Narendradityah;* Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dyn. Pl. XXIV, 5.

86. Gold coin of Chandragupta II, Gupta, 4th century A. D., obverse showing king nimbate wearing waist cloth and ornaments seated on high-backed couch, holding flower in right hand, his left hand resting on couch, legend below couch near foot-stool *rupakriti* and around *deva Sri Maharajadhiraja Sri Chandraguptasya;* Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dyn. Pl. VI, 9.

87. Lead coin of Sri Chandra Satavahana, 2nd century A. D., obverse showing horse standing opposite sacrificial post, legend in Brahmi, *Rano Siri Cada Satisa;* Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Andhra Dyn. W. Kshatra, Traikut, Bodhi Dyn. Pl. VI, G. P. 3.

88. Gold coin of Samudragupta, Gupta, 4th century A. D., obverse showing horse before sacrificial post with its pennons flying above the animal, beneath horse letter Si and legend around *Rajadhirajah prithivim avitva divam javatyaprativaryaviryah;* reverse showing chief queen nimbate standing wearing loose robe and ornaments carrying flywisk in right hand resting on her shoulder, opposite her sacrifical spear with fillet, lotus supporting queen's feet, legend to right *Asvamemdhaparakramah;* Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dyn. pl. V.

89. Memorial for sacrificial horse, Gupta, 4th century A. D., Lucknow Museum.

90. Gold coin of Samudragupta showing Chandragupta I and Kumaradevi, Gupta, 4th century A. D., obverse showing Chandragupta nimbate standing to left wearing closefitting coat, trousers and ornaments, holding standard in left hand and offering a ring held in right hand to Kumaradevi nimbate who stands on left facing the king wearing under and upper garments and ornaments, legend on either side of standard *Camdra* and *Gupta* and on left

Kumaradevi; Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dyn. Pl. III.

91. Gold coin of Samudragupta showing Chandragupta I and Kumaradevi, Gupta, 4th century A. D., reverse showing goddess Lakshmi nimbate facing on couchant lion carrying noose in right hand and cornucopia in left arm, her feet resting on lotus, legend to right *Lichchhavayah;* Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dyn. Pl. III.

92. Gold coin of Kumaragupta I, Gupta, 5th century A. D., obverse showing king with goad in right hand, riding elephant advancing left, behind the king is seated an attendant holding umbrella over him, traces of legend which is lost; Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dyn. Pl. XV, 16.

93. Memorial for a hero who fought and slew a tiger, Chola, 10th century A. D., Kilmuttugur, South India.

94. *Gograhana* warrior memorial, Chola, 10th century A. D., Kilmuttugur, South India.

95. Hero stone showing the hero proceeding in celestial car attended by nymphs, 12th century A. D. , Bihar.

96. Memorial for a beloved queen, Halidevi, raised by her husband, 5th century A. D., Western India.

97. Tirumala Nayak and his queens, Nayak, 17th century A. D., Madurai, South India.

98. Krishnadevaraya and his queens, Vijayanagar, 16th century A. D., Tirupati, South India.

99. Rajaraja with Karuvurar, from contemporary painting, Chola, 11th century A. D., Tanjavur, South India.

100. Rajaraja adoring the Lord Adavallan (Natesa) in Chidambaram-from contemporary painting, Chola, 11th century A. D., Tanjavur, South India.

101. Gandaraditya memorial panel by Sembianmadevi, Chola, 10th century A. D., Konerirajapuram, South India.

102. Simhavishnu and his queens, Pallava, 7th century A. D., Mahabalipuram, South India.

103. Narasimhavarman, Pallava, 7th century A. D., Mahabalipuram, South India.

104. Mahendravarman and his queens, Pallava, 7th century A. D., Mahabalipuram, South India.

105. Vishnuvardhana in court, Hoysala, 12th century A. D., Belur, Karnataka.

106. Narasimha on swing in harem, Eastern Ganga, 13th century A. D., Konarak, Orissa.

107. Narasimha adoring deities, Eastern Ganga, 13th century A. D., Konarak, Orissa.

108. Portrait of Sankara, Pallava, 8th century A. D., Kanchipuram, South India.

109. Portrait of Kanishka, Kushana, 1st century A. D., Mathura Museum.

110. Vikramaditya and queen, Western Chalukya, 8th century A. D., Pattadakal, Western India.

111. Madanantaka, Chola, 11th century A. D., Gangaikondacholapuram, South India.

112. Ardhanarisvara, Chola, 9th century A. D., South India.

113. *Natyamandapa,* Chola, 12th century A. D., Darasuram, South India.

114. *Natmandir,* Eastern Ganga, 13th century A. D., Konarak, Orissa.

115. Dance *Karana* panels on the *Gopuram,* Chola, 13th century A. D., Chidambaram, South India.

116. *Pushkarani* tank and temple, Nayak, 17th century A. D., Madurai, South India.

117. *Gopuras* of temple, Chola, 13th century A. D., Chidambaram, South India.

118. *Adhyayana* (study) of Vedas in temple, South India.

119. *Vimana* of Rajarajesvara temple, Chola, 11th century A. D., Tanjavur, South India.

120. Temple festival, deity in palanquin, Tiruvarur, South India.

121. Dances in temple, South India.

122. Music and dance scene from mural, Chola, 11th century A. D., Tanjavur, South India.

123. Dance scene from mural, Chola, 11th century A. D., Tanjavur, South India.

124. *Hallisalasya* dance, Gupta, 5th century A. D., Bagh Cave, Central India.

125. *Kalyanamandapa,* Vijayanagar, 16th century A. D., Vellore, South India.

126. Rishi Dirghatapas teaching disciples, Sunga, 2nd century B. C., Bharhut, Central India, Indian Museum.

127. Scribe writing, Ikshavaku, 3rd century A. D., Nagarjunakonda, South India, National Museum.

128. Sarasvati consecrated by Bhoja of Dhara, Paramara, 11th century A. D., British Museum.

129. Brahma with book in his hand, Vakataka, 6th century A. D., Elephanta.

130. Sarasvati, Kushana, 2nd century A. D., Lucknow Museum.

131. Manikkavachakar, Chola, 11th century A. D., Madukkur, South India.

132. Nandivarman chosen as King by the people headed by the authorities of the University (*Ghatika*), Pallava, 8th century A. D., Kanchipuram, South India.

133. *Mahasankalpa,* Sailendra, 8th century A. D,. Barabudur, Java.

134. *Mahasankalpa,* on Sravanapurnima, from life, South India.

135. Close embrace, Rashtrakuta, 8th century A. D., Ellora, Deccan.

136. The kiss, Eastern Ganga, 13th century A. D., Konarak, Orissa.

137. The loving deer, Pallava, 7th century A. D., Mahabalipuram, South India.

138. Rama and Sita loving like Chakrāvaka birds, Sailendra, 9th century A. D., Prambanan, Java.

139. Rain of wealth, Sailendra, 8th century A. D., Barabudur, Java.

140. Maya's dream of Bodhisattva entering her womb, Sunga, 2nd century B. C. Bharhut, Indian Museum.

141. Maya's *dohada,* Suddhodana's visit, Satavahana, 2nd century A. D., Amaravati, Madras Musem.

142. Mother and child, Gupta, 6th century A. D., Gwalior Museum.

143. Presentation of child to the family deity, Ikshvaku, 3rd century A. D., Nagarjunakonda, National Museum.

144. *Jatakarma,* Sailendra, 8th century A. D., Barabudur, Java.

145. Balarama and Krishna wearing *Kakapakshas* as children, Pala, 8th century A. D., Pahadpur.

146. Terracotta plaque depicting the scene of Udayana eloping with Vasavadatta, Sunga, 2nd century B. C., Kausambi.

147. Unwilling bride carried by force, Satavahana, 2nd century A. D., Amaravati.

148. *Kanyadana,* Eastern Ganga, 13th century A. D., Konarak, Orissa.

149. *Saptapadi* (Kalyanasundara), Pala, 11th century A. D., Rajshahi Museum.

150. *Panigrahana* (Kalyanasundara), Chola, 11th century A. D., Tiruvottiyur, South India.

151. *Arghya,* Sailendra, 8th century A. D., Barabudur, Java.

152. *Padya,* Sailendra, 8th century A. D., Barabudur, Java

153. *Atithisatkara,* from Sasajataka, Ikshvaku, 2nd century A. D., Goli, Andhra Pradesh.

II INTRODUCTION II

The blossoms of Indian culture have been reared in the garden of Dharma, Artha and Kāma and have always spread the beautiful fragrance of Moksha which has been ever the goal from every standpoint on Indian soil. The king, the nobleman, the priest, the trader, the warrior, the cultivator, the teacher, the disciple, the husband, the wife, the parent, the child, the stranger, the friend, the foe, even the most unconcerned recluse and mendicant in India have always been guided in their outlook on life by that single word of significance, Dharma. So to understand the spirit of Indian culture we should understand the significance of Dharma. But it is very difficult to understand Dharma by any particular definition as it is intimately connected with life; and Dharma is only a happy mode of living for the benefit of the world without injustice to the self. It is a full, true, loving and aesthetic mode of life in which the nobler sentiments of man have their full play. Considered from various aspects of life the flowers of Indian culture are as full of colour and splendour as the fragrance that they spread.

In India, as in any other country, certain fundamental ideas proclaim national ideals, and if the nation is to be understood, these ideals should be studied. In a tropical country, rich in mountains and rivers, warm with the warmth of the sun during the day and cool in the silvery light of the moon by night, with twinkling stars in a dark bright sky that give an impression of vastness, with trees laden with flowers and fruit, lakes and pools filled with lotuses and lilies, animals and birds as friendly companions all around, the people, living in such bright, natural surroundings, developed a love and affection for nature itself. Among the traits characterising the people were truthfulness and gratitude. For the former, Megasthenes has paid a great tribute to Indians as he bears testimony to an amazing discovery of his that in India there was none who knew what uttering falsehood was—and this was only in the 4th century B.C. The dictum *kṛite cha pratikartavyam esha dharmas sanātanaḥ* and the famous Kṛitaghnopākhyāna or the Nāḍījaṅghopākhyāna as it is called in the *Mahābhārata,* shows how people detested anything that was the opposite of gratitude. For every little thing man felt favoured and offered his thanks and expressed his sense of gratefulness. The little twig for washing the teeth was taken from the tree with apologies and thanks. Fancy created kindly *Vanadevatās,* wood sprites, that would offer food, toilet requirements and everything else required by man as a friendly gift, and he in turn loved and adored them. Life was conceived as sweet, and a spirit of affection for all beings was expressed in prayer for everything, including the streams, the herbs, the wind that blows, the very night and day, abounding herds of cattle, warmth of the sun, the very dust of the earth, proclaiming all to be sweet.

Great and noble sentiments were conceived as personified forms of nature. The mountains, protecting walls, that formed a great boundary and sheltered as it were our country, were conceived as the very embodiment of majesty; rivers, nourishing the children of the soil with water, were adored as a mother. Confluences of these rivers and special sacred spots, pleasant and inspiring, were chosen and glorified. One of the greatest spots was the confluence of the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā at Prayāga. Another

sacred spot is Pushkara, the glorious Lotus Lake, at Ajmer. The sacred bathing spot at Prabhāspāṭan, in Gujarat; and the confluence of the two oceans, near the glorious cape at the extreme end of the peninsula; the sea-side spot of Jagannātha at Purī to the east, all of them beautiful spots with the charm of natural beauty imprinted on them; large and prosperous cities with famous universities as seats of learning and a halo of sanctity, as great religious spots, like Banaras and Kāñchīpuram, are famous. The Universities at Takshaśilā, Nālandā, Uddaṇḍapura, are very well known. The *Kshetra* of Mahākāla at Ujjain is mentioned as magnificent by Kālidāsa, and for sheer wealth and splendour there was nothing to surpass Ujjain and Pushpapura. Students flocked from distant corners of the country to these world-famed universities; and we know that the greatest physician of Magadha and contemporary of Buddha—Jīvaka, son of Bimbisāra and half brother of Ajātaśatru, often figuring in legend as a wizard in surgery and unrivalled in ability as a physician, had his training in this distant Takshaśilā. Mayūraśarman, the founder of the Kadamba dynasty, was educated in the far-off *Ghaṭika* (university) at Kāñchīpuram.

But the spiritual class of *Brahmavādins,* who sought realisation of the soul and about whom we have so many touching anecdotes regarding their pursuit of knowledge, truth, the meaning of life, the Absolute, the One highest existing Factor, the great seers like Yājñavalkya of the highest Brahmanical order, whose objective was the realisation of the *Ātman, ātmā vā* are *drashṭavyaś śrotavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ,* or the great Rājarishis, like Janaka, endowed with the greatest wisdom, living in the world, but yet free from the shackles of it, and capable of maintaining composure even when Mithilā was in flames— *"anantam bata me vittam yasya me nāsti kiñchana, mithilāyām pradīptāyām na me dahyati kiñchana", Mahābhārata* xii, 171, 56, were great because of their *tapaśśakti.* The seven great seers—Atri, Bhṛigu, Kutsa, Vasishṭha, Gautama, Kaśyapa and Aṅgiras are well known and, as Kaṇva puts it, their only wealth was self-restraint. They delighted in Dama, Dāna and Dayā, restraint, sacrifice and kindness, avoiding cruelty, the three 'Das' mentioned in the Upanishad, as taught by Prajāpati to the Devas, Manushyas and Asuras—*tad etad evaisha daivī vāg anuvadati stanayitnuḥ da dada iti damyata, datta, dayadhvam iti—Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* v, 2.3.

These great attributes making man almost divine, lead one to a consideration of the attributes of God, as He is the very embodiment of mercy and sacrifice, love and affection, for those who seek Him as their refuge. As a personification of these attributes we have a galaxy of divine forms composing a complex pantheon, of which examples are Vishāpaharaṇa as the embodiment of mercy, Gajendramokshada, love to devotee personified, Tripurāri, the highest power incarnate for vanquishing evil, Liṅgodbhava, suggesting the incomprehensibility of the Absolute and Raṅganātha and Naṭarāja, symbolising the condition of the Lord beyond the three normal states of existence—awake, asleep and dreamy.

Attributes of God lead one to the abstruse concept of comprehending the incomprehensible. His immanence, transcendence, omniscience and omnipotence are not easily grasped, like other more tangible attributes, by the devotee, who craves for a form more easily conceived and understood, however magnificent it may be. The devotee's thought is moulded by a sentiment of love and affection for a personal God, conceived in a form that appeals to him, as either the father or the mother or a brother or even as a child. His predilection for any one form in preference to others is expressed in the different creeds of the followers of Devī, Śiva, Sūrya, Vishṇu (Bhagavān) and Gaṇeśa. The inordinate love and attachment to a particular form unknowingly brings in elements of fanaticism or the exclusion of other creeds. Finding such mental schisms amongst the followers of the different creeds, the great monotheistic

master, Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkarāchārya, taught the synthesis of cults and introduced *pañchāyatana.* The concept of Sūrya as the very embodiment of eternity is one of the messages of synthesis in *Sandhyā*. A unique sculpture of the early medieval period, showing Harihara flanked by Sūrya and Buddha, is an indication of the great spirit of tolerance at the time of the Emperor Harshavardhana, in whose house itself every member was a follower of a different sect, but all of them were passionately attached to one another.

The deity in form and in symbol leads us to other symbols with great significance, conveived and presented in Indian literature and art. They have their spiritual, artistic, literary and social significance.

In a spirit of obeisance to that spiritual master, that fed the intellect and showed the path of virtue, and the cow that sustained and nourished the physical well-being, *mahāmantras*, like, *"namo brahmaṇyadevāya gobrāhmaṇahitāya cha jagaddhitāya kṛishṇāya govindāya namonamaḥ"*, were conceived and the true significance of this great theme has not only been presented at length in spiritual and secular literature, but also in the early inscriptions and sculptures, including motifs on coins.

As the welfare of a nation itself was more dependent on the kshatriya king, the various attributes of the ideal king, his great qualities, responsibilities and ideals dealt with from every aspect and at length, particularly in the Anuśāsana Parva of the *Mahābhārata,* the *Arthaśāstra, Manusmṛiti* and in general literature, still have nowhere been represented better than on the marvellous early Indian coinage where every attribute of the ideal king has been vividly represented.

The kings dedicated themselves to the service of the Lord and presented themselves so in effigies, even after death, but not in the least for any self-adulation; and such memorials occur all the world over, the king, queen or nobleman, with hands, clasped in adoration in effigy, close to the deity he or she chose to worship, even after the mortal eyes had closed in eternal sleep.

Other memorials for humbler folk are not less significant in conveying the spirit of sacrifice in the pursuit of Dharma. Those who died in helping the punishing of offenders in a *gograhaṇa*, or fighting a wild animal, like a tiger or a lion that devastated the neighbourhood, or a great and faithful lady who ascended the funeral pyre of her husband, had a memorial put up, with an inscription describing the great and glorious event of the warrior in battle or the woman who followed the glorious dead to heaven above.

An ancient epigram of a great Indian poetess forbids residence in a village without a temple. In fact, the temple was the hub around which life moved in a village. The temple was a great spot. It was not only a place of religious significance, but it was important also from the social, economic, cultural, artistic, educational and other aspects. From inscriptions we know that even elections to the Assemblies for the village and district councils, took place with the temple as the centre for registering votes and announcing the results. The temple had a huge granary from which corn was doled out in times of famine. Dance and music, arts and crafts, flourished mainly because of the need of the temple and the inspiration that it gave in abundance. It was in the temple that every evening the illuminating portions of the *Mahābhārata*, making up the Śānti and Anuśāsana Parva, were read and explained to give the people of the village, young and old, rich and poor, the most liberal education that ever was possible. The daily dance in the evenings, the music and recitals, the periodic festivals, the grand movement of the temple car, not only fostered the fine arts and gave a liberal education in appreciating the nuances of the arts but also brought about a great sense of unity and brotherhood amongst the people of the realm. The village school was in the temple. There are elaborate inscriptions in temples

detailing the various branches of knowledge that were taught in the temple itself; and deities were conceived as the embodiment of learning, like Dakshiṇāmūrti, Brahmā and Sarasvatī. Rāma himself is conceived as expounding the highest philosophy to the sages and the *dhyānaśloka* of this has become almost a daily verse in prayer for those reciting the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki.

Four *purushārthas,* or objects to be striven for, have engaged the attention of all those who have tried to live a balanced life, i.e. *Dharma*—righteous conduct; *Artha*—wealth, righteously obtained and not in the least tainted; *Kāma*—love, sublime and unaffected by anything gross and free from all dross; *Moksha*—liberation from the bondage of births and deaths by the realisation of the Absolute, the one Reality. This is possible by a balanced life on attainment of the first three objects, leading to the final emancipation, which is the highest end.

For this purpose, the new-born child was trained from the very beginning and nurtured in such a fashion that he became ideally perfect. The various stages of this "polishing" of a child were known as the *samskāras* which started with the birth and the name-giving and ended with the final lighting of the funeral pyre at the hands of his progeny.

The ideals, ambitions and dreams of the righteous spirit in India have been wonderfully presented in literature and art, and some of these ideas have been collected together and presented in the following pages to provide a glimpse of the thought, outlook and the aim at perfection, to the extent humanly possible, as conceived in India in the spirit of *Dharma* which is the ideal pattern of life. Indian culture is only the Indian way of life.

II KULAPARVATA-MOUNTAINS-HIMĀLAYA II

In every sphere India has thought in terms of *Dharma* and *Ṛita*, and the whole of nature around man has been so conceived that every aspect like a mountain or stream, day, night, weeks, months and years, the planets, the very trees and herbs could be personified, with great and noble qualities attributed to them, so that man could learn to love nature and draw his lessons of *Dharma* from every object around him, and live that good life that would ultimately be his one great pride, so that, when laying down the mortal frame, man could look back with satisfaction on the sweet life that he had lived. The mountains encircling the land were conceived as great and noble powers, as personified towers of dignity, of majesty, with strength to support the entire universe, preaching to the world the lesson of sacrificing oneself for the support of others. The great *Kulaparvatas* or the mountains, as they were conceived, formed the fortress, as it were, for an entire family of people within their compass. Though the word *Kula* has been used always in the sense of suggesting the best of a class, by stress on noble birth as in the case of *Kulaputra, Kulīna* and so forth, the *Kulaparvatas* stretched on all sides may also suggest the idea of one family of people encompassed by them. The mountains and the ocean have always been the supreme models for lofty character and deep, noble qualities, one for the former and the other for the latter.

dhairyena himavāniva
gāmbhīryāt sāgaropamaḥ

This is why the mountain is always personified as a great *Mahāpurusha.*

The most magnificent of the mountains in the world are the Himālayas which adorn, as it were, this great land of ours. India must be justly proud of this fine range of mountains. In fact, in India, all the great mountains, which form natural protective barriers for the country, have been adored in almost a divine aspect. It is not without reason that the great mountains are called *Kulaparvatas.* The familiar couplet

mahendro malayas sahyas śaktimān
ṛikshaparvataḥ
vindhyas cha pāriyātras cha saptaite
kulaparvatāḥ

enumerates these mighty mountains. The most magnificent of them all is the *Himālaya.* It is this that makes Kālidāsa eloquent when speaking of this great mountain. He describes it as of essence divine.

astyuttarasyām diśi devatātmā Himālayo
nāma nagādhirājaḥ
pūrvāparau toyanidhī vagāhya sthitaḥ
pṛithivyā iva mānadaṇḍaḥ
—*Kumārasambhava,* i,1.

To the north there is the over-lord of mountains, named Himālaya, that is essentially divine, standing, stretching across from one ocean to the other, east to west, as if it were the measuring rod for the earth.

This is the great mountain, the abode of snow, the tallest, the most imposing. Every mountain has its own magnificence and the most magnificent of them all is the Himālaya.

The great poet Vālmīki compares the loftiest objects to Meru and Mandara. The concept of Mandara is superb. It is such a lofty mountain that it alone could serve as churning stick for the

ocean. The migthy Rāvaṇa, the great opponent of the hero of Vālmīki's story, is compared to Mandara. With a dark thick waist-cord on his hip Rāvaṇa looks like the very churning stick Mandara with Vāsuki around it as the cord.

śroṇīsūtreṇa mahatā
mechakenābhisamvṛitaḥ
amṛitotpātanaddhena bhujageneva
mandaraḥ

—*Rāmāyaṇa*, v, 22, 26.

The same poet compares Rāma to another great mountain, Himavān, in praising this hero's undaunted courage.

dhairyeṇa himavān iva

—*Rāmāyaṇa*, i, 1, 17.

Vālmīki mentions Meru with Mandara in describing the noble heights of great mansions almost reaching the sky.

merumandarasamkāśair ālikhadbhir
ivāmbaram

—*Rāmāyaṇa*, v, 9, 14.

As the ocean is taken for comparison as a supreme object of unfathomable depth in order to stress the deep and noble virtues of a prince like Rāma, the glorious heights of mountains like Himavān are also chosen for emphasising the lofty nature of the hero.

In relation to Pṛithvī or earth, however, the mountains appear more as her limbs or as her ornaments. That is why Kālidāsa, who characterises the great and long range of Himālaya as but a *mānadaṇḍa*, a measuring rod for the earth, fancies the mountains Malaya and Dardura as the sandal smeared breasts of Earth.

sa nirviśya yathākāmam
taṭeshvālīnachandanau
stanāviva diśas tasyāś śailau
malayadardurau

—*Raghuvamśa*, iv, 51.

Likewise also we find Himavān and Vindhya, two great mountains, described as the ear-ornaments of the earth damsel.

imām sāgaraparyantām
himavadvindhyakuṇḍalām
mahīm ekātapatrāṅkām rājasimhaḥ
praśāstu naḥ.

This *bharatavākya* of Bhāsa is thus most appropriate in the happy concept of the mountains as ornaments.

The magnificence of another great mountain, Vindhya, is, in a subtle manner, suggested by Kālidāsa in one of his verses, where he describes the great exploits of the short, but powerful, sage Agastya.

vindhyasya samstambhayitā mahādrer
niśśeshapitojjhitasindhurājaḥ
prītyāśvamedhāvabhṛitārdramūrtes
sausnātiko yasya bhavatyagastyaḥ

—*Raghuvamśa*, vi, 61.

This great sage, who subdued the great mountain Vindhya, was the one that drank up the entire ocean as well. By the knitting of Agastya's brow, the great Nahusha, who occupied the high position of the lord of the gods as Indra, was brought down to earth in a trice. We know that the *padavī* of Indra was most coveted, and great emperors, like Sagara and Dilīpa, attempted its attainment by performance of a hundred *aśvamedha* sacrifices. Nahusha who achieved this, lost it by displeasing Agastya. The great mass of water constituting the ocean that, according to its own explanantion to Rāma, could not transgress its own *velā* or boundary, and which baffled even the great army of Rāma in the process of crossing over it, was just a sip of water for Agastya. This is that great Agastya that subdued Vindhya the mountain that grew and grew and obstructed the path of the luminous objects in the sky, and even baffled the gods by its amazing height to the alarm of the denizens of heaven and that bowed to the sage and remained in that position for ever in accordance with his orders. And it is no wonder that Kālidāsa thought that this was the greatest of the achievements of Agastya and put it first. But even there he could not refrain from exclaiming that this mountain was indeed a magnificent one.

vindhyasya samstambhayitā mahādreḥ

He is not satisfied with the use of merely the word *adri*, mountain, but he needs must call it *mahādri*, great mountain.

In another context, in describing the prowess of a mighty king, who had come as a suitor in the *svayamvara* of princess Indumatī, Kālidāsa calls him the lord of Mahendra and the Mahodadhi. He is the lord of the great mountain and the great ocean.

asau mahendrādrisamānasāraḥ patir
mahendrasya mahodadheś cha
yasya ksharatsainyagajachchhalena
yātrāsu yātīva puro mahendraḥ
—*Raghuvamśa, vi, 54.*

He could only think of the grandeur of the mountain and ocean together; the ocean for its depth and the mountain for its dizzy heights. When describing the valorous battle that the king of Kalinga gave to Raghu, Kālidāsa compares the splendid elephants of his army to great mountains, all arrayed for fighting Indra. Mahendra, as we know, is one of the mighty mountains of India, the most important of the ranges known as the Eastern Ghats.

The valleys of the mountain present their splendid landscape with a rapid stream dashing here, running there, and flowing with splashing sound, suddenly slackening her pace and broadening her stream, among the straggling rocks of the wide, mountainous, valley as in the case of Narmadā at the foot of the Vindhya.

mārgaishiṇī sā kaṭākantareshu
vaindhyeshu senā bahudhā vibhinnā
chakāra reveva mahāvirāvā
baddhapratiśrunti guhāmukhāni
—*Raghuvamśa,* xvi, 31

and

revām drakshyasyupalavishame
vindhyapāde viśīrṇām
bhaktichchhedair iva virachitām bhūtim
aṅge gajasya
—*Meghadūta*, i, 19.

The artistic vision of Kālidāsa is impressed by the beauty of the mountain, wherever it is, and he cannot help exclaiming in terms of comparison to hill and stream in an appropriate context. The lord of the Pāṇḍyas, seated in the *svayamvara* of Indumatī, with his dark body anointed with fragrant sandal paste, and with a long, lustrous necklace of pearls, flowing on his chest from his shoulders, appears like a magnificent mountain, tinged with the red glow of the rising sun and with white streams flowing down its slopes.

pāṇḍyoyam amsārpitalambahāraḥ
kḷiptāṅgarāgo harichandanena
ābhāti bālātāparaktasānus sanirjharodgāra
ivādrirājaḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, vi, 60.

It is most appropriate that he should have chosen this in the case of the Pāṇḍya, as the sandal paste, *malayachandana* is found on the mountain Malaya, to the extreme south of India, and a stream flowing on that would be an appropriate parallel to the description of the Pāṇḍya who was the lord of the Malaya. The mighty sandal trees of the Malaya mountain have rightly evoked the praise of Kālidāsa.

The slopes of the Malaya hill are the subject of Kālidāsa's glorification with their ichor-smelling cardamom forests and fragrant sandal trees, their trunks entiwined by large pythons, fascinated by sweet smell of sandal.

sasañjuraśvakshuṇṇānām elānam
utpatishṇavaḥ
tulyagandhishu mattebhakaṭeshu
phalareṇavaḥ
bhogiveshṭanamārgeshu chandanānām
samarpitam
nāsrasat kariṇām graivam
tripadichchhedinām api
—*Raghuvamśa*, iv, 47—48.

The laterite tint, so peculiar to the mountain-slopes and so colourful in determining the mountainscape has not missed the keen attention of Kālidāsa. He is ever attentive to such pictures of natural beauty. The beautiful cow of tawny colour, Nandinī, with the pale white lion on it, as Dilīpa saw it, cannot but make Kālidāsa compare the picture of a *Lodhra* tree in

blossom, on the reddish mountainside.

sa pāṭalāyām gavi tasthivāmsam
dhanurdharaḥ kesariṇam dadarśa
adhityakāyām iva dhātumayyām
lodhradrumam sānumataḥ praphullam
—*Raghuvamśa*, ii, 29.

In another context, in describing the long procession of people following Kuśa, returning to inhabit his original capital of Ayodhyā, on the way from the city of Kuśāvatī lying among mountains and streams, the artistic sense of Kālidāsa is kindled as he sees and describes a pitcure of red dust of laterite, raised by a long parade of chariots, animals and men, and the deafening noise, of such a huge congregation in the valley. It at once reminds him of the similar deafening sound of the river, Narmadā, with her gushing stream in a similar valley.

mārgaishiṇī sā kaṭakāntareshu
vaindhyeshu senā bahudhā vibhinnā
chakāra reveva mahāvirāvā
baddhapratiśrunti guhāmukhāni
sa dhātubaddhāruṇayānanemiḥ prabhuḥ
prayāṇadhvanimiśratūryaḥ
vyalanghayad vindhyam upāyanāni paśyan
pulindair upapāditāni
—*Raghuvamśa*, xvi, 31, 32.

The form of hill and dale, mountain and stream, always was an attraction for Kālidāsa and he has fondly imagined great and noble qualities and traits in personified mountains and streams. Nestled on the mountain Himavān, as if on his lap, the beautiful city of Alakā looks like a damsel, with the pure stream of Gaṅgā flowing close to her, like her silken garment loosened. The Sanskrit poet has ever conceived of a city in personified form as a damsel, and so Ayodhyā comes and wooes king Kuśa as her lord. So Alakā here on the lap of Himavān

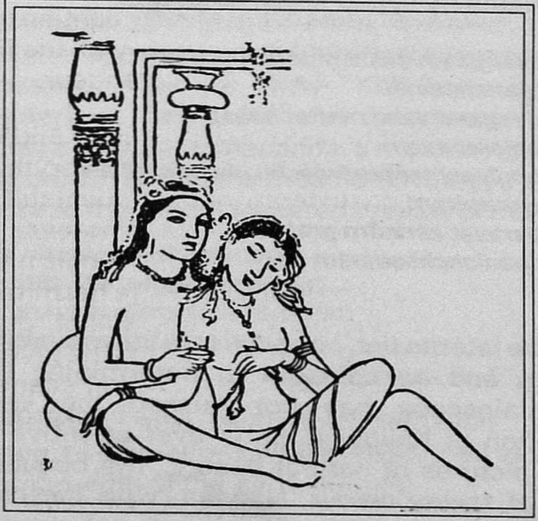


Fig. I. In the lap of the lover, Vākātaka painting, 5th century A.D., Ajaṇṭā, Deccan.

tasyotsaṅge praṇayina iva
srastagaṅgādukūlām
na tvām dṛishṭvā na punar alakām jñāsyase
kāmachārin
—*Meghadūta*, i, 63.

gives indeed a picture of the damsel on the lap of her lover as the poet described her

aṅkamaṅkaparivartanochite tasya ninyatur
aśūnyatām ubhe
vallakī cha ḥridayaṅgamasvanā valguvāg
api cha vāmalochanā
—*Raghuvamśa*, xix, 13.

Magnificent pictorial representation of it abounds, as for instance, in the painting from Ajaṇṭā (Fig. 1).

In the great concept of the earth as a never-failing cow yielding great treasures, the legend has it that Meru was the milkman and Himavān the calf. It is this importance of Himālaya as the *vatsa* of Pṛithvī, as the producer of the most important of the valuables the earth can offer, the *oshadhis* and gems, that Kālidāsa introduces in the verse

yam sarvaśailāḥ parikalpya vatsam merau
sthite dogdhari dohadakshe
bhāsvanti ratnāni mahaushadhīś cha
pṛithūpadishṭā duduhur dharitrīm
—*Kumārasambhava*, i, 2.

The treasure-house of innumerable valuables, Himavān, cannot be blamed for his being the abode of snow as well. Like the blemish on the moon-disc, the single defect amidst so many excellences escapes attention.

In fact, it does not detract from the beauty, the natural beauty, of the mountain.

anantaratnaprabhavasva yasya himam na saubhāgyavilopi jātam
eko hi dosho guṇasannipāte nimajjatīndoḥ kiraṇeshvivānkaḥ
—*Kumārasambhava*, i, 3.

The great qualities of the mountain are innumerable. Kālidāsa has enumerated some of them, being personally charmed with such divine beauty. The red earth on its slopes, at its crest, used by divine nymphs for their toilet and decoration, reflected in the clouds, produces the illusion of the red glow of sunset before its time.

yaschāpsarovibhramamaṇḍanānām
sampādayitrīm śikharair bibharti
balāhakachchhedavibhaktarāgām
akālasandhyām iva dhātumattām
—*Kumārasambhava*, i, 4.

Enjoying the shades of clouds moving on the slopes and troubled by their showers, Siddhas resort to the sunny tops of the mountain.

āmekhalam sañcharatām ghanānām
chhāyām adhas sānugatām nishevya
udvejitā vṛishṭibhir āśrayante śṛiṅgāni
yasyātapavanti siddhāḥ
—*Kumārasambhava*, i, 5.

Their sensations are thus gratified in the case of the Siddhas, as eyesight is charmed by the picture of twilight, by a look at the picturesque glow on the mountain-tip, or by the luminous *oshadhi*—medicinal plants, that light up the caves at night and serve as oilless lamps for lovers, in the wild jungle.

vanecharāṇām vanitāsakhānām
darīgṛihotsaṅganishaktabhāsaḥ
bhavanti yatraushadhayo rajanyām
atailapūrās suratapradīpāh
—*Kumārasambhava*, i, 10.

The sense of hearing is also gratified by the very natural musical note produced by the wind-filled bamboo clusters which serve, as it were, as musical drone for Kinnara damsels engaged in music.

yaḥ pūrayan kīchakarandhrabhāgair
darīmukhotthena samīraṇena
udgāsyatām ichchhati kinnarāṇām
tānapradāyitvam ivopagamtum
—*Kumārasambhava, i, 8.*

There is equal satisfaction of the smell by the sweet odour of the flowing milk from Sarala trees against the trunks of which wild elephants rub their bodies.

kapolakaṇḍūh karibhir vinetum
vighaṭṭitānām saraladrumāṇām
yatra srutakshīratayā prasūtas sānūni
gandhas surabhīkaroti
—*Kumārasambhava, i, 9.*

The sense of touch, however, causes an apparent painful effect by the freezing cold of the snow boulders, that benumb the fingers and toes of the Kinnara nymphs as they move along. The spectator is charmed by the slow, but pleasing, gait of the damsels whose weight of hips and numbness of feet retard their quick steps.

udvejayatyaṅgulipārshṇibhāgān mārge
śilībhūtahimepi yatra
na durvahaśroṇipayodharārtā bhindanti
mandam gatim aśvamukhyaḥ
—*Kumārasambhava*, i, 11.

All these descriptions, and much more that Kālidāsa has given so elaborately, are in praise of the natural beauties of the great mountain that satisfy and overwhelm in every way all the five senses of the spectator by their grandeur.

But over and above all this Kālidāsa considers Himavān as the abode of everything that is holy; he considers the mountain itself as the very embodiment of purity. Wherever he can he introduces the hermitage of Ṛishis on or in the vicinity of the Himālayas. The hermitage of Kaṇva is on the banks of the Mālinī, quite close to the foot of the Himālayas and he gives a picturesque description of the natural scenery there, as painted by Dushyanta as a background for the scene representing Śakuntalā.

kāryā saikatalīnahamsamithunā srotovahā
mālinī

pādās tām abhito nishaṇṇahariṇā
gaurīguroḥ pāvanāḥ
śākhālambitavalkalasya cha taror
nirmātum ichchhāmyadhaś
śṛinge kṛishṇamṛigasya vāmanayanam
kaṇḍūyamānām mṛigīm
—*Abhijñanaśākuntalam, vi, 18.*

Here the word *pādāstām abhito nishaṇṇa-hariṇā gaurīguroḥ pāvanāḥ* shows the holy atmosphere at the foot of the Himālaya, which recalls the description of the sacred spot, fit for sacrifices, described by Manu.

kṛishṇasārastu charati mṛigo yatra
svabhāvataḥ
sa jñeyo yajñiyo deśo mlechchhadeśas
tataḥ paraḥ
—*Manusmṛiti*, ii, 23.

Already holy, the mountain is rendered all the more so by the Ganges flowing from its crest. Himavān himself is conscious of this fact, as may be seen in his remark when he welcomes the holy presence of the Saptarishis, the seven sages that approached him for the betrothal of Umā with Śiva.

avaimi pūtam ātmānam dvayenaiya
dvijottamāḥ
mūrdhni gaṅgāprapātena
dhautapādāmbhasā cha vaḥ
—*Kumārasambhava*, vi, 57.

Just as Gaṅgā is proud of her origin from the foot of Vishṇu, similarly a matter of pride for the holy river is her second origin from the crest of the Himālaya.

yathaiva ślāghyate gaṅgā pādena
parameshṭhinaḥ
prabhavena dvitīyena tathaivochchhirasā
tvayā
—*Kumārasambhava*, vi, 70.

Not satisfied with this Kālidāsa, the great devotee of Devī, delights in calling the mountain the father of Gaurī.

pādās tām abhito nishaṇṇahariṇā gaurīguroḥ pāvanāḥ
—*Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, vi, 18.

gaurīguror gahvaram āviveśa
—*Raghuvamśa*, ii, 26.

Kālidāsa delights in presenting a glorious picture of the majestic personality of the royal mountain Himālaya. It is not the artificial *chaurī*, waved before royalty, that proclaims the dignity of this great mountain, but it is the very natural yaktail of the Chamarīs, white like the moon-beams, that proclaims the royal presence on the mountain.

lāṅgūlavikshepavisarpiśobhair itastatas
chandramarīchigauraiḥ
yasyārthayuktam girirājaśabdam kurvanti
vālavyajanaiś chamaryaḥ
—*Kumārasambhava*, i, 13.

Even the sun, in brightening up the lotus flowers, in the lakes on its summit, handled only by the holy Saptarishis, awakens them with his rays directed upwards almost as if in obeisance to the mighty cliffs of the Lord of Mountains.

Saptarshihastāvachitāvaśeshānyadho
vivasvān parivartamānaḥ
padmāni yasyāgrasaroruhāṇi
prabodhayatyūrdhvamukhair mayūkhaiḥ
—*Kumārasambhava*, i, 16.

Kālidāsa admires the nobility of the mountain that was a ready refuge for all who were terror-stricken. The undaunted alone could offer protection to any that sought one's help. In a humorous way Kālidāsa puts it that even Darkeness, terrified from Daylight, that rushed into his caverns to seek refuge there, was easily assured protection by that lofty-headed mountain, as even the lowest or the meanest, when seeking protection, was to be reassured by the lofty.

divākarād rakshati yo guhāsu līnam
divābhītamivāndhakāram
kshudrepi nūnam śaraṇam prapanne
mamatvam uchchaiśśirasām satīva
—*Kumārasambhava*, i, 12.

In fact Himavān is comparable only to Purushottama, the Lord, who by his three mighty strides encompassed the whole universe. This was by a strong effort the

Fig. 2. Himavān giving away Pārvatī in marriage to Śiva (Kalyāṇasundara), Vākāṭaka, 6th century A.D., Elephanta, Western India.

achievement of Hari, but in the case of the great mountain his all-pervasive form, encompassing the whole earth, was but his natural trait.

tiryag ūrdhvam adhastāchcha vyāpako
mahimā hareḥ
trivikramodyatasyāsīt sa tu svābhāvikas
tava

—*Kumārasambhava,* vi, 71.

And naturally he was the essence of Vishṇu, amongst the motionless objects on earth

sthāne tvām sthāvarātmānam vishṇum
āhus tathā hi te

—*Kumārasambhava,* vi, 72.

Kālidāsa makes a difference between the *sthāvara* and *jaṅgama* body of the mountain, the movable and the immovable. All the required strength of the mountain was in his *sthāvara* body, but his *jaṅgama* body was an essentially different one, full of that courteous movement that bespeaks high birth and breeding.

kāṭhinyam sthāvare kāye bhavatā sarvam
arpitam
idam tu te bhaktinamram satām
ārādhanam vapuḥ

—*Kumārasambhava,* vi, 73.

Himavān himself considers that his twofold aspect of body is for the adoration of the holy by his movement, and for receiving holy footprints of seers and sages on his slopes, in his motionless permanence.

jaṅgamam preshyabhāve vas sthāvaram
charaṇāṅkitam
vibhaktānugraham manye dvirūpam api me
vapuḥ

—*Kumārasambhava,* vi, 58.

In the *Vishṇudharmottara* it is very clearly stated that the mountain should be represented personified on its own peak in human form. It is this picture of the mountain that we get in the Rāmāyaṇa where Maināka, the mountain-prince and son of Himavān, darts up from the ocean in human form, on his own peak, and addresses Hanumān, requesting him to rest a while on his slopes.

prito hṛishṭamanā vākyam abravīt parvataḥ
kapim
mānusham dhārayan rūpam atmanaś
śikhare sthitaḥ

—*Rāmāyaṇa,* v, 110-111.

It will be interesting to see how this great concept of Himavān has impressd the sculptor as it has inspired the poet, and it would be the most thrilling thing to find a sculptural representation of the great lord of mountains. Indeed we are happy that we have such a representation, and that it is a great masterpiece by a master craftsman.

Amongst the most marvellous carvings in India are to be reckoned the glorious panels of gigantic size at Elephanta, where the figures reveal the charms of the Gupta-Vākāṭaka pattern but with more of the early mediaeval delicacy in workmanship. It is probably a sculptor of the Vākāṭakas that was responsible for the masterpieces in Elephanta and one of these is a panel showing the marriage of Śiva, as Kalyāṇasundara (Fig. 2). In his form as a bridegroom, Śiva is shown holding the hand of Pārvatī in wedlock, and just behind Umā we find Himavān and Menā, in human form, presenting their daughter in marriage to Śiva. The dignity of this great sculpture at once recalls how great are the personalities and how tremendous is this, their alliance, as Kālidāsa so forcefully expresses in his verse

umā vadhūr bhavān dātā yāchitāra ime
vayam
varaś śambhur alam hyesha
tvatkulodbhūtaye vidhiḥ

—*Kumārasambhava,* vi, 82.

The mountain king is here represented in his most majestic aspect, and Himavān is here, not only the emperor of the most lofty mountains, who far outweighs all the gods and denizens of heaven, but he is adorable by the gift of his daughter to that Lord who is the Lord of all, adored by all, and adoring none Himself.

astotus stūyamanāsya
vandyasyānanyavandinaḥ

Fig. 3. Brahmā and ṛishis requesting Himavān to give his daughter in marriage to Śiva, Vākāṭaka, 6th century A.D., Ellora.

sutāsambandhavidhinā bhava viśvaguror guruḥ

—*Kumārasambhava*, vi, 63.

The *pūrṇakumbha* in the hand of Menā suggests her fully gladdened heart. It almost represents an answer to that glance of the king of mountains that Kālidāsa describes in the context of Himavān, looking at his wife Menā, though himself fully satisfied about Śiva's alliance, in order to know her mind as the mother of the bride; indeed, Himavān, felt embarrassed and looked abashed when the Lord, adored by the three worlds, bowed to him, but himself did not know that his own lofty peak was bent, even from a distance, at the very sight of the Lord.

hrīmān abhūd bhūmidharo hareṇa
trailokyavandyena kṛitapraṇāmaḥ
pūrvam mahimnā sa hi tasya dūram
āvarjitam nātmaśiro viveda

—*Kumārasambhava*, vi. 54.

One of the masterpieces of the Vākāṭaka sculptor at Ellora presents a long panel with scenes of the story of Pārvatī's wedding, and it begins significantly with the request made to Himavan for giving his daughter to Śiva in Marriage (Fig. 3). Here is shown the great Lord of Mountains, looking significantly at his queen, Menā, for her approval of this most coveted match, as only ladies give a decision on this matter.

prāyeṇa gṛihiṇinetrāḥ kanyārtheshu kuṭumbinaḥ

—*Kumārasambhava*, vi, 11.

The painter has not lagged behind the sculptor in presenting the grandeur of

Himālaya. A Pahāri painting shows this happy theme of Himavān receiving Śiva as a bridegroom; who bows at his feet and embarrasses the mighty mountain as described in Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava* (Fig. 4).

And the highest peak on the Himālayas, which is known as Gaurīśankar, may well recall this glorious Kailāsa dwelling of Śiva and Pārvatī, haloed by legend; and well may we join Kālidāsa as he makes the ladies of Oshadhiprastha (the capital of Himavān) notice the added importance of Himavān, caused by his association with the Lord Śiva.

anena sambandham upetya dishtyā
manorathaprārthitam īśvareṇa
mūrdhānam āli kshitidhāraṇochcham
uchchaistaram vakshyati śailarājaḥ
—*Kumārasambhava,* vi, 67.

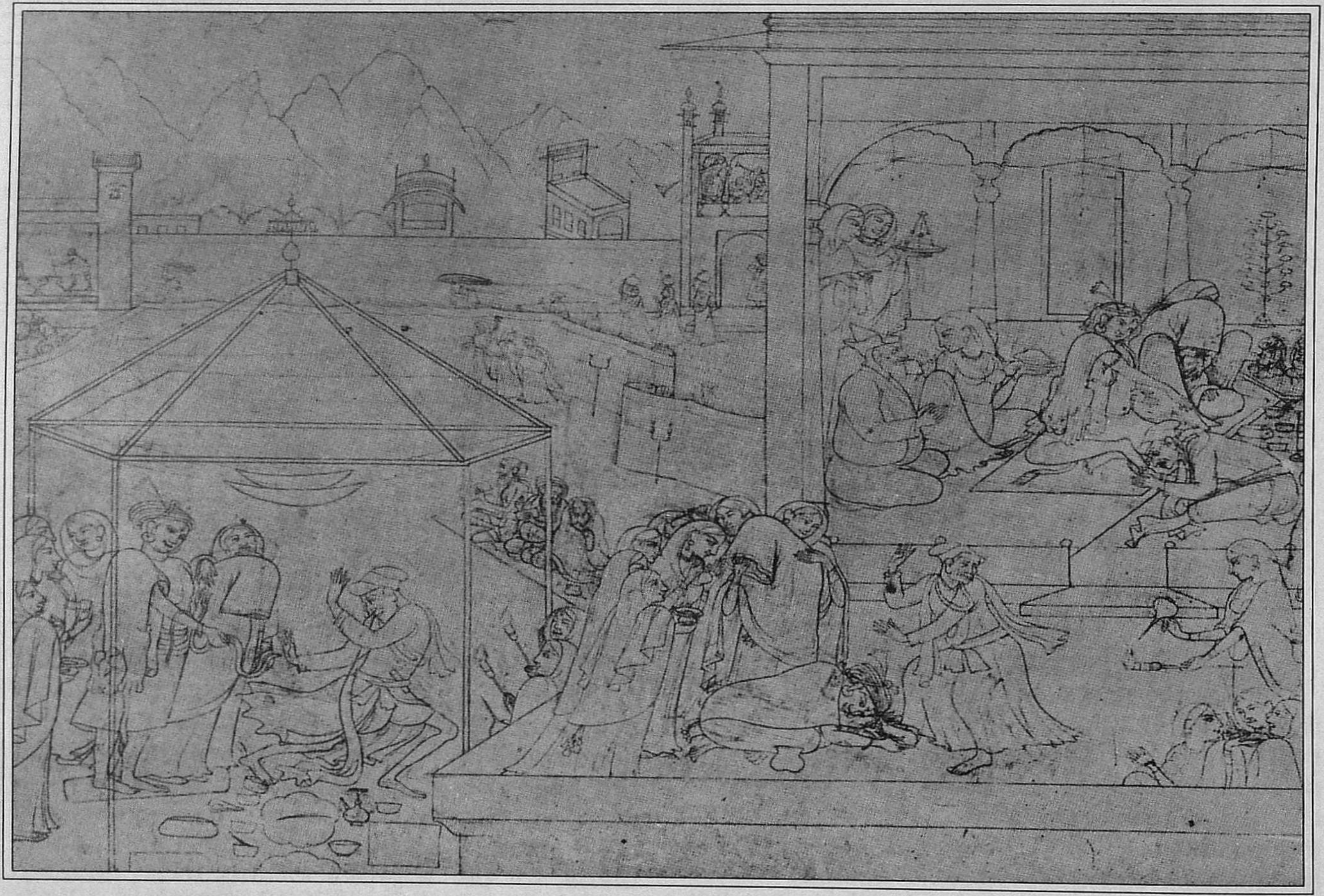


Fig. 4. Himavān receiving Śiva who bows to him, Kangra painting, 17th century A.D.

|| NADĪ-RIVERS-GAṄGĀ, YAMUNĀ, SARASVATI ||

The Indian concept of a river is that of a sustaining mother. The word *'payas'*, meaning both water and milk, has been appropriately used in relation to a river, for the river sustains the people, her children, with water, as the mother sustains babies with her milk. As Rāma approaches in his *Pushpakavimāna* and sights Sarayū, he addresses Sītā and describes the river in affectionate terms as if she were his mother beckoning and trying to embrace him with her wavy arms.

seyam madīyā jananīva tena mānyena
rājñā sarayūr viyuktā
dūre vasantam śiśirānilair mām
taraṅgahastair upagūhatīva
—*Raghuvamśa*, xiii, 63.

On her lap the children of the soil could sit and muse without thought of the future as the region known as *Nadī-mātṛika* was sustained by the river and was just the opposite of *Deva-mātṛika*, a region that depended solely on the Gods for rain.

yām saikatotsaṅgasukhochitānām prājyaiḥ
payobhiḥ parivardhitānām
sāmānyadhātrīm iva mānasam me
sambhāvayatyuttarakosalānām
—*Raghuvamśa*, xiii, 52.

But amongst all the rivers in India, Gaṅgā has always had the highest appeal. Gaṅgā is a sacred name on the lips of every Hindu and is sincerely believed to purify one by its mere utterance. It is the heavenly river brought to the earth through great effort for the purification of one and all. It is the standard by which the greatness of every other river in India is judged, as the Gaṅgā stands supreme among all rivers. A number of other rivers, such as the Kāverī are believed to be transformed into the Gaṅgā at least for a few days in the year. At any rate, that is the faith which pilgrims who dip in the river on those sacred days specified in the Purāṇa have. Dwelling on the banks of Gaṅgā is a privilege. Sanskrit rhetoricians take a delight in giving the line *śaityapāvanatvādi vyajyate.* But it is not the proximity of the Gaṅgā alone that is believed to have this purifying influence. Even from a great distance the very utterance of the name is enough for the attainment of final bliss.

Fig. 5. Gaṅgā guarding temple doorway, Vijayanagara, 15th century A.D., Tāḍpatri, South India.

Fig. 6. Gaṅgā and Yamunā guarding temple doorway, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Buxar, Bihar, Indian Museum.

gaṅgā gaṅgeti yo brūyād yojanānām śatairapi
vimuktas sarvapapebhyo vishṇulokam sa gachchhati.

The *Gaṅgā and the Yamunā guarding doorways to purify visitors:* As one enters the *gopura* of any temple in South India one may see on either side of the door-jamb a figure of the Gaṅgā standing on *a makara* and holding a creeper that issues from the mouth of *makara* (Fig. 5). This proceeds in a meandering fashion to form circles framing panels, that represent different forms of deities and figures of dancers that run in a line to the top, up to the lintel, several feet in height. Her presence purifies the visitor as he enters. One may wonder why the Gaṅgā is repeated on the *makara* twice, one on either side, and why she of all other rivers should have been chosen for representation when there are other rivers like the Godāvarī, the Kṛishṇaveṇī and the Kāverī. The reason is obvious; Gaṅgā is the holiest. To see why the Gaṅgā is so represented in sculpture one has only to turn to Gupta sculpture and door-jambs of temples of the period. Invariably the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā are represented in human form on the door-jambs. The rivers are shown on their respective vehicles, the *makara* and the *kachchhapa*, crocodile and tortoise, attended by attendants, one of whom raises the parasol over the head of the river goddess. Swans fluttering above, with garlands of lotuses or lilies in their beaks, suggest cool fragrance and aquatic associations. Sometimes the river goddesses carry water jars, as they should do, according to the Śilpa texts, that describe their iconography, as for instance in the *Vishṇudharmottara*. These goddesses in human form remind us at once of Kālidāsa's description of rivers in anthropomorphic form attending, with *chaurīs*, on Śiva.

mūrte cha gaṅgāyamune tadānīm
sachāmāre devam asevishātām
—*Kumārasambhava*, vii, 42.

The finest representation of the Gaṅgā and

the Yamunā guarding doorways is probably from Dah Parvatiya. There is a fine doorway similarly decorated from Buxar in Bihar in the Gupta Gallery in the Indian Museum (Fig. 6). The *sārasa* birds fluttering over the head of the river goddess, as though fascinated by the sweet notes of the tiny jingling golden beads of her girdle, present a picture like that painted by Kālidāsa of similar birds on the wing over the stream of the Godāvarī.

amūr vimānāntaralambinīnām śrutvā
svanam kāñchanakiṅkiṇīām
pratyudvrajantīva kham utpatantyo
godāvarīsārasapaṅktayas tvām
—*Raghuvamśa*, xiii, 33.

Fig. 7. *Nadīmātṛikā from Amarāvatī and Mathurā, Sātavāhana and Kushān, 2nd century A.D., in the British Museum and Bhārat Kalā Bhavan respectively.*

The Gaṅgā as Sustainer: But why is it that the Gaṅgā is repeated on both the door-jambs of temples is South india? The reason is not far to seek; the Gaṅgā is the most important river, she is the model for all others and naturally she alone is repeated. We find that the river goddess on the *makara* which typifies the Gaṅgā is represented as early as the 2nd century A.D. on a slab at Amarāvatī and here she is repeated as in later sculpture and two identical figures of the river goddess flank a Nāga. The original slab is now in the British Museum. Here the goddess is shown carrying food and water, in a tray and a jug respectively (Fig. 7 right), and exactly resembles a similar figure of Kushān date, but without the vehicle, at the Bharat Kala Bhavan in Banaras (Fig. 7 left). This attitude of the goddess, suggesting abundant water and a never failing supply of it, and food obtained by a plentiful harvest of splendid crops, raised without the least effort in the river-irrigated area, reminds us of the line of Bhāravi in the context of the peace and plenty of the Kuru realm, watered by the Yamunā and the Gaṅgā, that assure crops without toil.

sukhena labhyā dadhataḥ kṛishīvalair
akṛishṭapachyā iva sasyasampadaḥ
vitanvati kshemam adevamātṛikāś
chirāya tasmin kuravas chakāsati
—*Kirātārjunīya*, i, 17.

This sculpture is a visual commentary on the term *nadīmātṛika* which is the same as *adevamātṛika* as opposed to *devamātṛika*.

Following the description of Nadīdevatā in the *Vishṇudharmottara,* which records the traditional concept of the river goddess, there are carvings in Amarāvatī showing her carrying a *pūrṇakumbha* or a vessel brimming with water. The *pūrṇakumbha* itself, with lotuses and water, is a symbol not only of plenty and auspiciousness but also of the river, and the earliest symbolic representation of the purifying influence of the river goddess, guarding the entrance on either side, which accounts for the presence of *pūrṇakumbhas* flanking the doorway (Fig. 8).

prāgdvāravedivinivesitapūrṇakumbhām
—*Raghuvamśa*, v, 63.

The Gaṅgā as an adornment for Earth : In the mind of the Gupta sculptor, and even in the earliest centuries, it is the *ekāvali* composed of fine pearls that was preferred among necklets and often expresses itself through the brush and

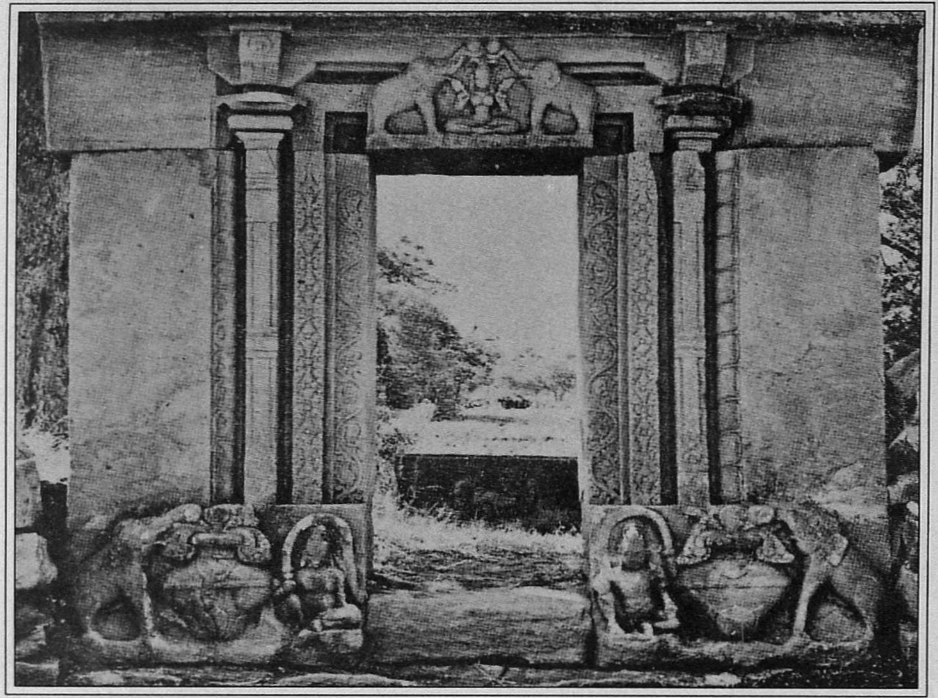


Fig. 8. Doorway flanked by Pūrṇakumbha suggesting Gaṅgā and Yamunā, the nidhis Śaṅkha and Padma and elephants associated with Śrī, Western Chāḷukya, 6th century A.D., Aihoḷe, Western India.

chisel in painting and carving, and in the representations of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā the same *ekāvalī* is shown to beautify the neck. In picturesque fashion Kālidāsa presents the pure white stream of the Gaṅgā, gradually narrowing in size in the far distant landscape, as a necklace of pearls close fitting to the earth damsel's neck.

eshā prasannastimitapravāhā
sarid vidūrāntarabhāvatanvī
mandākinī bhatī nagopakaṇṭhe
muktāvalī kaṇṭhagateva
bhūmeḥ

—*Raghuvamśa,* xiii, 48.

The beauty of the Gaṅgā with the Yamunā's waters commingled in hers : The beauty of this white stream is sometimes enhanced by the commingling of the blue waters of the Yamunā. Kālidāsa fancifully suggests that, with the white sandal paste from the breasts of the damsels from the harem of the Śūrasena king, Susheṇa, washed off during their sportive baths, the Yamunā looked as if she were charged with the waters of the Gaṅgā, even near Mathurā.

yasyāvarodhastanachan-
danānām prakshālanād
vārivihārakāle
kalindakanyā mathurām
gatāpi
gaṅgormisamsaktajaleva
bhāti

—*Raghuvamśa, vi, 48.*

In his *Kuvalayānanda,* Appayya Dīkshita gives just the opposite picture of how the collyrium from the eyes of the damsels of the enemy kings of the Mālava king had made the stream of Narmadā dark, and consequently created a misapprehension in the mind of Samudrarāja, the lord of rivers.

kālindi brūhi kumbhodbhava jaladhir aham
nāma gṛihṇāsi kasmā-

chchhatror me narmadāham tvam api
vadasi me nāma kasmāt sapatnyāḥ

mālinyam tarhi kasmād anubhavasi
milatkajjalair mālavīnām

netrāmbhobhiḥ kim āsām samajani kupitaḥ
kuntalakshoṇipālaḥ

—*Kuvalayānanda.*

The most glorious picture in literature of the commingling of rivers is that of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā by Kālidāsa. This picturesque confluence at Prayāga has made it a great *tīrtha,* and Kālidāsa's description is a painting in words, like the masterpiece of the sculptor, which has glorified the *tīrtha* by representing the rivers personified, on their streams which commingle and flow to meet Samudrarāja, as

depicted in the Udayagiri cave in Central India.

The *Gaṅgā* as *Tripathagā* : But the greatest glory of the Gaṅgā is that she is the one river to be singled out. She has three streams, she flows in three regions and she purifies three different areas. Kālidāsa delights in often referring to the Gaṅgā, the stream as she flows in heaven.

Fig. 9. *Gaṅgā and the Vasus, Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D., Paṭṭaḍakal, Western India.*

Ākāśagaṅgā, wherein the elephants of the eight quarters bathe with delight and the seven Ṛishis have their holy ablutions.

nadatyākāśagaṅgāyās
srotasyuddāmadiggaje

—*Raghuvaṁśa*, i, 78

āplutās tīramandārakusumotkiravīchishu
vyomagaṅgāpravāheshu
diṅgnāgamadagandhishu

—*Kumārasambhava*, vi, 5.

The presence of the Gaṅgā in Pātāla was a matter of necessity as the ancestors of Bhagīratha, who had gone after the sacrificial horse, were cursed there, and to raise them to

Fig. 10. Gaṅgā flowing past the diggajas in Pātāla to purify the sons of Sagara burnt by sage Kapila, Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D., Paṭṭaḍakal, Western India.

heaven the Gaṅgā had to be brought from heaven. The Gaṅgā, who, with her cool breeze and the shade of Mandāra trees on her bank, served as the ideal pleasure ground for divine beings trickled down from the locks

mandākinyās salilaśiśirais
sevyamānā marudbhir
mandārāṇām anutaṭaruhām

Fig. 11. Gaṅgā received in the water vessel of sage Jahnu and released again through his ear to flow from the Himālaya, Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D., Paṭṭaḍakal, Western India.

chhāyayā vāritoshṇāḥ

—*Meghadūta, ii, 6.*

of Śiva, on which she had fallen, and, following Bhagīratha, reached the ashes of his ancestors, in the nether-world, to take them step by step, like a ladder, by the efficacy of her purificatory power, to heaven.

jahnoḥ kanyām
sagaratanayasvargasopānapaṅktim

—*Meghadūta, i, 50.*

The Gaṅgā as Tripathagā, the sacred river purifying the three worlds, is the theme of a sculptural narration on a pillar in the Virūpāksha temple at Paṭṭaḍakal. Here is represented her great spirit of self-scrifice and kind compliance with the wishes of the Vasus (Fig. 9), whom she delivered from the curse of Vasishṭha, and her effort to wash the remains and raise to heaven the sons of Sagara, who were burnt to ashes by sage Kapila, whom they attempted to attack for carrying away their sacrificial horse as they supposed by the presence of the animal in his vicinity in Pātāla. The nether-world is indicated by the *diggaja* supporting the earth and the sixty thousand princes who rushed in one body against Kapila are suggested in one aggressive figure attacking a sage (Fig. 10), and the approach of Gaṅgā is, as in the other panels, suggested both by a stream and her anthropomorphic form as a damsel.

Her descent to earth is shown in the panel where the stream and the maiden, representing it, approach Śiva who receives her on his locks and imprisons her there. On the prayers of Bhagīratha, who performs severe penance again, the stream of Gaṅgā, is released once more (Fig. 12), and she proceeds towards the mountain Himavān, whence she flows down and past sage Jahnu's hermitage, where the enraged anchorite receives her in his *kamaṇḍalu* (water vessel) and gulps her in a sip. Again on the entreaties of Bhagīratha she is released through the ear of the sage (Fig. 11), finally to reach the ashes of the sons of Sagara in the nether-world.

The description of how Kuśa when he approached the Gaṅgā on his way to Ayodhyā from Kuśāvatī, for re-establishing it as his capital, bowed to the holy river, whose waters were the means for conducting to the world of immortals the remains of his ancestors, who were reduced to ashes through the anger of Kapila, suggests the great veneration due to this great river. Even Kuśa, who was the very image of his father, the great incarnation of the Lord Himself, bowed to it with devotion.

sa pūrvajānām kapilena roshād

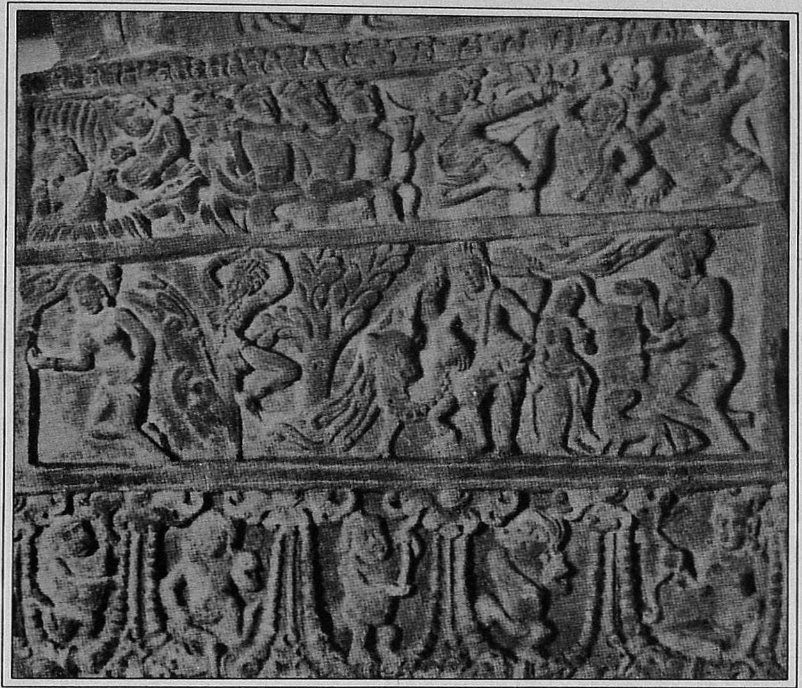


Fig. 12. Gaṅgā flowing on to Śiva's locks and released therefrom on the prayers of Bhagīratha, Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D., Paṭṭaḍakal, Western India.

Fig. 13. Gaṅgā descending on Śiva's locks (Gaṅgādhara), Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Gaṅgaikoṇḍachoḷapuram, South India.

bhasmavaśeshīkṛitavigrahāṇām
surālayaprāptinimittam ambhas
traisrotasam naululitam vavande
—*Raghuvamśa,* xvi, 35.

In a panel showing Gaṅgādhara in the Śiva temple at Gaṅgaikoṇḍachoḷapuram (Fig. 13), built by the mighty Choḷa emperor Rājendra, this story of Bhagīratha's penance is clearly illustrated. The Gaṅgā was revered so much by this mighty monarch that he brought the water of the sacred river down to the South in vessels offered as tribute by kings overcome by him in battle in the region of the river, and a large lake he dug for it was the "liquid pillar of victory", as he assumed the title Gaṅgāikoṇḍachoḷa, the Choḷa who brought the Gaṅgā. The central panel in the niche shows Śiva appeasing Pārvatī, who is vexed with him, and consequently turned her face away, distressed at the prospect of a co-wife in the Gaṅgā, who has settled on the locks of Śiva. At Lepākshī there is a painting rendering graphically this theme (Fig. 14). It is like Kālidāsa to give colour to this domestic quarrel in Śiva's household in the vivid picture he presents of how the Gaṅgā clutched at the locks of Śiva with her wavy hands, laughing through her foam at the knit brows of Pārvatī's angry face.

tasmād gachchher anukanakhalam
śailarājāvatīrṇām jahnoḥ kanyām
sagaratanayasvargasopānapaṅktim
gaurīvaktrabhrukuṭirachanām yā vihasyeva
phenaiś śambhoh keśagrahaṇam akarod
indulagnormihastā
—*Meghadūta,* i, 50.

The carving on either side of the panel shows the penance of Bhagīratha and his determined effort to bring the Gaṅgā from heaven, which has become proverbial on account of its almost impracticable nature. However mighty and torrential the Gaṅgā may have been, and we know according to the story, that she came down with great force, expecting Śiva to collapse under the great torrent, she got

lost in his cauldron of locks.

jaṭākaṭāhasambhramabhramannilimpanir-
jharīvilolavichivallarīvirājamānamūrdhani
—Śivatāṇḍavastotra.

In sculpture the Gaṅgā is therefore shown as humbly approaching Śiva. In carvings representing Gaṅgādhara, in South India and the Deccan and also at Elephanta, the Gaṅgā on the locks of Śiva is represented in true aquatic fashion as a mermaid, her body below the waist being that of a fish. One or two locks of Śiva, singled out and held out lightly to receive the mighty torrent, show how easy was this sport to

Fig. 14. Gaṅgā descending on Śiva's locks (Gaṅgādhara), Vijayanagar, 16th century A.D., Lepākshi, South India.

the Lord who could swallow the poison, Kālakūṭa, no less easily. At Tiruchirāpalli, in the Pallava cave, the Gaṅgādhara panel represents the simple ease with which Gaṅgā was received (Fig. 16). The finest representation of Gaṅgā in mermaid fashion is probably from the temple at Dārāsuram (Fig. 15) and in this the wavy line decoration on the lower part of the figure suggests beautifully the stream of the heavenly river.

Gaṅgā as Trisrotas and Jāhnavī : At Elephanta there is a marvellous panel representing Śiva as Gaṅgādhara, but here the sculptor is not satisfied with a tame representation of just a mermaid like figure for the river. The three streams of Gaṅgā, as she flows in heaven, on earth and in the nether-world, in which aspects she is Tripathagā and Trisrotas, are delineated as the three faces of the mermaid, on the locks of Śiva (Fig. 17). It also suggests the Triveṇī or the three streams, the Gaṅgā with the Yamunā and the Sarasvatī, that join and swell her waters, further sanctifying the already sacred stream of the heavenly river. This is one of the outstanding sculptural renderings of the Triveṇī aspect of the Gaṅgā in a Gaṅgādhara panel.

At Ellora the line of Kālidāsa

jahnoḥ kanyām
sagaratanayasvargasopānapaṅktim
—Meghadūta, i, 50.

has a pictorial commentary as it were, as here it is not Gaṅgādharamūrti but Gaṅgāvisar-jjanamūrti, Śiva releasing the Gaṅgā from his locks at the earnest request of Bhagīratha (Fig. 18). Here the pride of Gaṅgā, descending torrentially on the locks of Śiva, humbled, is seen imprisoned in the cage of locks for a number of years. It is only after the desperate entreaties of Bhagīratha that she was released again. This time, as the stream followed Bhagīratha, she devastated the hermitage of the sage Jahnu on the way and so enraged him that in one gulp he swallowed up the mighty river to the utter dismay of Bhagīratha, who, this time, had to entreat the sage to release the river again. As the sage graciously chose to oblige Bhagīratha, the river Gaṅgā was allowed to flow out again through his ear, and ever since, the ear has been considered the birth place of the Gaṅgā; and even in *Sandhyā* the ear is touched in token of washing the hand. Issuing from the ear of the sage Jahnu she became the daughter of Jahnu, Jāhnavī, and it is as Jāhnavī that she

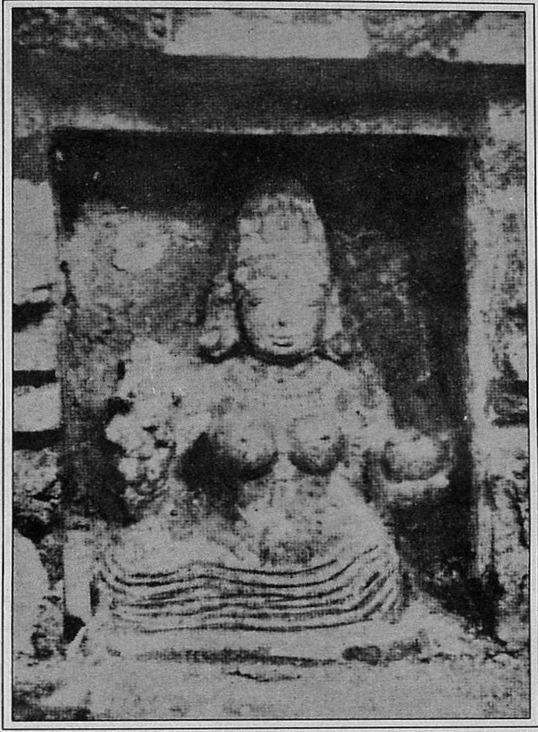


Fig. 15. Gaṅgā, Choḷa, 12th century A.D., Dārāsuram, South India.

Fig. 16. Gaṅgā descending on Śiva's locks (Gaṅgādhara), Pallava, 7th century A.D., Tiruchirāpaḷḷi, South India.

flowed again towards where Bhagīratha led her to wash the ahses of his ancestors. In the sculpture at Ellora the sage Jahnu is shown seated sipping the stream of the Gaṅgā issuing from Śiva's locks.

The Gaṅgā as bride: A Gupta sculpture from Rajaona, in Bihar, presents Gaṅgā approaching Śiva on a *makara* with her hands in *añjali* exactly as a bride would timidly approach her newly wedded lord (Fig. 19). Śiva holds out a lock of hair to receive her there. The Gaṅgā is here shown as a *nāyikā*, lovingly approaching her beloved one, and this is not merely Gaṅgāvataraṇa but Gaṅgāpariṇaya of Śiva. The Gaṅgā is not shown here in mermaid form, but in a pure and complete anthropomorphic figure as she is shown on Gupta door-jambs.

The blessed life on the banks of the Gaṅgā: The sanctity of the Gaṅgā and the blessed life on her banks where gods, sages, men, birds and animals alike throng, is most vividly presented in the Mahābalipuram scene of Arjuna's penance on the banks of the river Gaṅgā near the mountain Raivataka (Fig. 20). We have only to glance into the description of the heavenly river in the *Kumārasambhava* to understand the sculpture more clearly.

As Kālidāsa has drawn attention to *āloka, avagāha* and *āchamana* by the celestials, we find in this significant sculpture all the devas, including Sūrya, Chandra, Siddhas, Vidyādharas, Yakshas, Kinnaras and Nāgas approaching the Gaṅgā from both sides. The Gaṅgā herself is to be imagined as the stream in the cleft between the two rocks which are carved, and, where the stream is to be supposed, there are Nāgas and Nāginīs to suggest water. That the stream flows from heaven to the earth is suggested by the many celestials in the upper regions. Lower down Ṛishis and Munikumāras and a shrine for Vishṇu

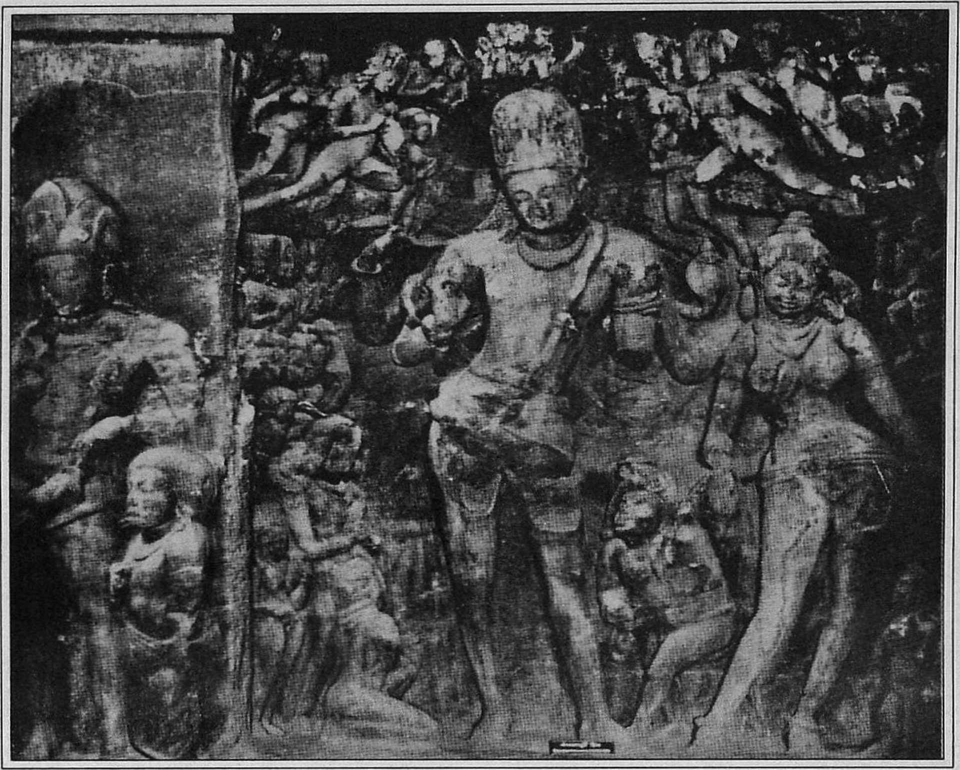


Fig. 17. Gaṅgā descending on Śiva's locks (Gaṅgādhara), Vākāṭaka, 6th century A.D., Elephanta, Western India.

suggest the Gaṅgā flowing on the earth. At the lowest point the Nāgas and the Diggajas suggest the nether-world where also she flows.

tribhis srotobhiraśrāntam punānā
bhuvanatrayam

—*Kumārasambhava*, x, 31.

śubhrair abhramkashair ūrmiśatais
svarganivāsinām
kathayantīm ivālokāvagāhāchamanādikam
susnātānām munīndrāṇām
balikarmochitairalam
bahīḥ pushpotkaraiḥ kīṛnatīrām
dūrvākshatānvitaiḥ
brahmadhyānaparair
yogaparabrahmāsanasthitaiḥ
yoganidrāgatair yogapaṭṭabandhair
upāsitām
pādāṅgushṭhāgrabhūmisthais
sūryasambaddhadṛiṣṭibhiḥ
brahmarshibhiḥ param brahma
gṛiṇadbhir upasevitām

—*Kumārasambhava*, x, 44-47.

The Ṛishis engaged in meditation on the banks of the Gaṅgā are shown in exactly the same position as Kālidāsa has described them, some in *brahmāsana*, in *brahmadhyāna* and *yoganidrā* with the *yogapaṭṭa*, a strip of cloth, bound round their legs, and some, like Arjuna and Munikumāra, with their eyes turned towards the sun. Arjuna is shown as an ascetic standing on his toe and doing severe penance. The Munikumāra is performing the *sūryopasthāna* after his *Sandhyā*, with his hands and fingers clasped in *yamapāśamudrā*, to look at the sun through the aperture so formed. The bath preceding the *Sandhyā* is indicated by another Munikumāra wringing water from his clothes after his bath. Yet another Munikumāra carries a vessel of water suggesting *bali* and *pujā* during the course of

which flowers and *akshatas* are strewn about. This atmosphere of devotion has helped opposites like lion and deer, cat and mice to come together and the cat has so far changed his habit that, instead of his usual *biḍālavrata*, he actually stands up in penance, like the most rigorous anchorite answering the description.

sarāgānvayanirvāṇakāriṇī dharmadhāriṇī
—*Kumārasambhava*, x, 30.

The greatness of the Gaṅgā is not easily recounted. Her sight purifies, bathing in her waters frees one from sins, the utterance of her name transports one by a magic ladder, as it were, to the highest heaven. The Indian sculptor has not in the least lagged behind the bard, who has sung the glories of this great river, in presenting her in all her glorious aspects. Like Vālmikī, who describes Pushpaka and, not being fully satisfied, goes again and again into ecstasies over it, Kālidāsa excells himself in his description of the Gaṅgā wherever opportunity occurs in his works and especially in the tenth canto of the *Kumārasambhava*. In his own words let us put the same question

kam nābhinandayatyeshā
dṛishṭā pīyūshavāhinī
—*Kumārasambhava, x, 48.*

The river Yamunā, as already noted, is usually associated with the Gaṅgā in most of the descriptions but Yamunā herself has her own individuality as in the vicinity of Mathurā she is hallowed by the sports of Kṛishṇa on her banks.

vihārarāsakhedabhedadhūtatīramārutā gatā
girām agocharo yadīyaniracharutā
pravāhasāhacharyapūramedinīnadīnadā
dhunotu me manomalam kalindanandinī
sadā
—*Yamunāshṭakam* 4.

agre dīrghataroyam arjunatarus tasyāgrato
vartanī
sā ghosham samupaiti tatparisare deśe
kalindātmajā
tasyās tīratamālakānanatale chakram
gavām chārayan
gopaḥ kṛīḍati darśayishyati sakhe
panthānam avyāhatam
—*Kṛishṇalīlātaraṅgiṇī*, ii, 43.

The bowers on the banks of the Yamunā are the favourite resort of the Lord of the cowherds. This stream, the sister of Yama and the daughter of Sūrya and a co-wife of Samudrarāja, along with the Gaṅgā, being one of the most important rivers of India, has inspired great poets and great artists, and her representations along with those of the Gaṅgā are very frequent as already noted. Her greatest glory is near the Triveṇīsaṅgama.

Talking of the three streams, the Gaṅgā, the Yamunā and the Sarasvatī, the last-mentioned now must be considered. The Sarasvatī is a great and ancient river, greatly revered along with the other two. Probably the line

nadīm ivāntassalilām sarasvatīm nṛipas

Fig. 18. Gaṅgā released from Śiva's locks (Gaṅgāvisarjjana), Rāshṭrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Ellora, Deccan.

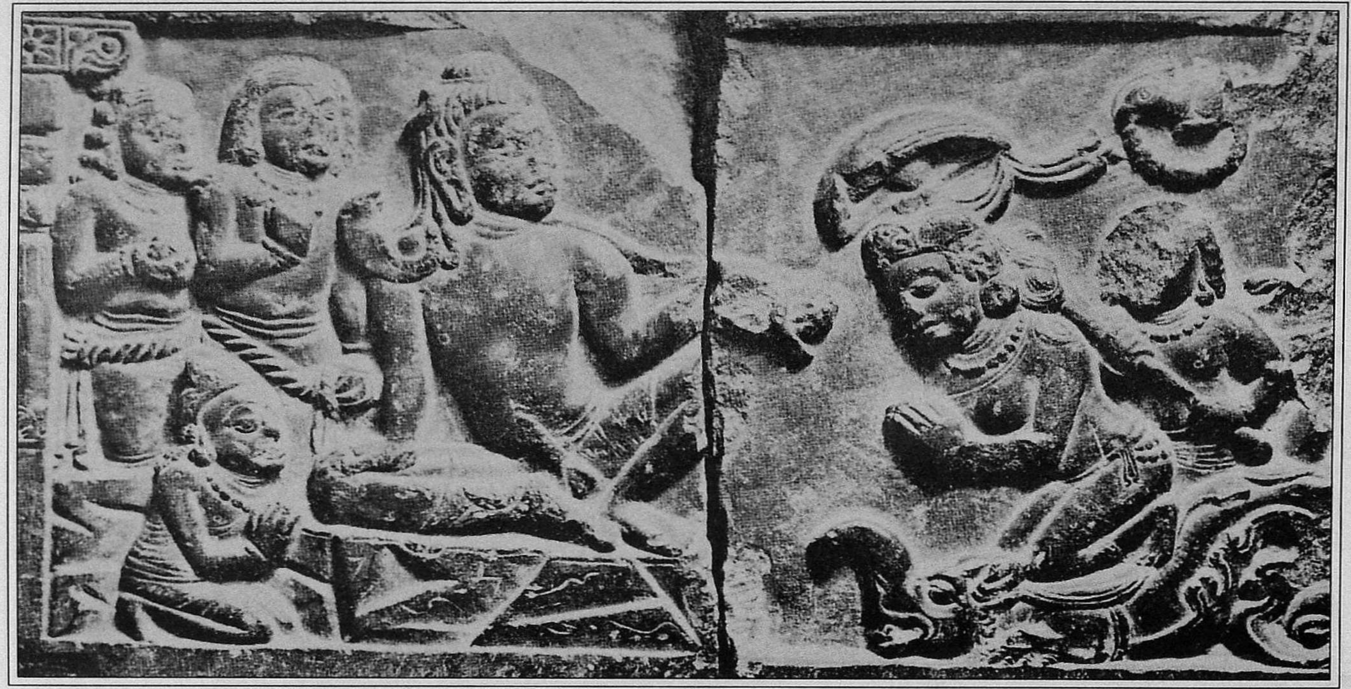


Fig. 19. Gaṅgā approaching to settle on Śiva's locks (Gaṅgādhara), 6th century A.D., Rajaona, Bihar, Indian Museum.

sasatvām mahishīm amanyata
—*Raghuvamśa,* iii, 9.

of Kālidāsa explains the paucity of representation in physical form of this river goddess. Even as a stream, the Sarasvatī is a river that has vanished and her water is supposed to be hidden below in her bed. Bāṇa mentions the river flowing near Thānesvar, but it is naturally the dried-up bed that we know of this river, and Kālidāsa's remark is quite true. At the *saṅgama* of the three rivers the presence of the Sarasvatī is fondly imagined by the devoted pilgrim. One of the most important sculptural groups representing the rivers is from Ellora and it is unique as it represents not merely the two famous rivers the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā but the triple stream that makes the great *saṅgama* at Triveṇī (Fig. 22). The three great rivers are shown as three goddesses in anthropomorphic form. This representation of personified rivers, especially those that compose the great *Prayāgakshetra,* is important when we consider that such a stress is laid on them only in one other place, namely Udayagiri, where, however, the invisible river is omitted.

The sanctity of Sarasvatī, as she flows in the vicinity of the holy Kurukshetra, is obvious in the verse given by Mammaṭa in his book on rhetoric to illustrate *yamaka* or alliteration.

sarasvati prasādam me sthitim
chittasarasvati
sara svatikuru kshetra kurukshetra
sarasvati
—*Kāvyaprakāśa,* ix, 366.

Here the mind is conceived as being as pure as Kurukshetra, and the blessing of Sarasvatī, the Goddess of Learning, by her presence there in the mind, is as efficacious as the holy presence of this pure stream Sarasvatī in that sacred soil of Kurukshetra. It is no wonder that such a great river finds at least some personified representation, with her vehicle, the swan, among the monuments which are masterpieces of art in India (Fig. 21).

Fig. 20. Gaṅgā as the means of nityakarmānushṭhāna of ṛishis, Pallava, 7th century A.D. Mahābalipuram, South India.

Fig. 21. Sarasvatī, Vākāṭaka, 5th century A.D., Ellora, Deccan.

The Narmadā is an equally favourite river. Even today, in South India, there is a sect of Brahmins who migrated from the Narmadā region, who persist in adoring this stream both morning and evening during the performance of their *sandhyā*. The reason for their choosing the Narmadā of all rivers to which to offer oblations is obvious, when we go into the history of their origin and their migration to the South. Among the sculptures of the Haihayas of Tripurī we find a representation of Narmadā as a river goddess and this shows that such representation was not unknown for several other rivers.

In fact, during the daily bath, every Hindu addresses the principal rivers and requests their presence in the water in which he would have his bath. In the vessel filled with water for bathing the deity in his household, it is the same prayer to the rivers—The Gaṅgā, the Yamunā and the Sarasvatī, the Godāvarī, the Narmadā, the Sindhu and the Kāverī for their *sānnidhya* or presence in that water-pot for the *pūjā* of the deity. The influence of the rivers, like that of the great mountains, the Kulaparvatas, has been an abiding one on the Indian mind. His mind leapt with joy, as towards the mother, at the very sight of every one of these holy streams, and it is no wonder that he honoured them by the best of his poetry and his art.

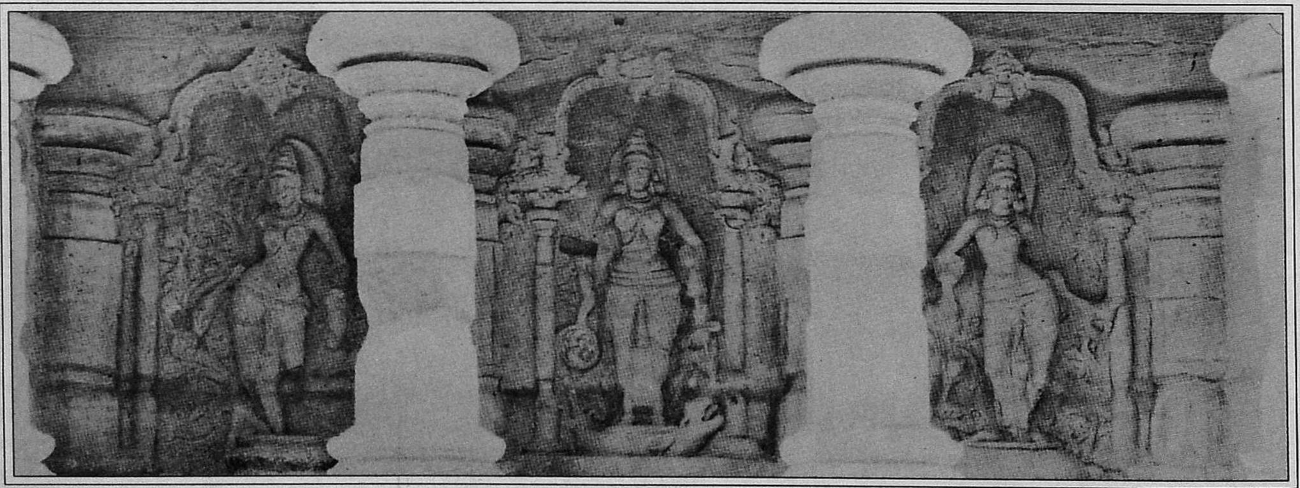


Fig. 22. Three streams, Rsāhṭrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Ellora, Deccan.

॥ TĪRTHA-PRAYĀGA ॥

The love for travel has been innate in man. Early man moved from place to place in search of the bare necessities of life in the hope of greater comfort in a place other than the one he occupied at the time. Later with better faculty of reasoning, with intellect more developed, man, with evolved thoughts of the Creator and His worship, also developed ideas associating divinity with certain spots, and pilgrimage to them for inhaling godliness. All over the world and in every faith, pilgrimage to religious spots has been the great sustaining factor in the religious life of man. In India this pilgrimage to sacred spots is often mentioned in epics like the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *kshetras* visited by several saintly people are mentioned by name. Prabhāsa, Pushkara, Gokarṇa, Vārāṇasi are amongst them. Even when we take the earliest inscriptions we find references to them. For example there is such an early one as that of Ushavadāta (Ṛishabhadatta), son-in-law of Nahapaṇa, who mentions the great gifts that he had made in several important *tīrthas,* like Prabhāsa and Vārāṇasi. It was sometimes the desire of people in a mood of renunciation to live the evening of their lives entirely in Banaras.

kadā vārāṇasyām amaraṭaṭinīrodhasi
vasan
vasānaḥ kaupīnam śirasi
nidadhānoñjalipuṭam
aye gaurīnātha tripurahara śambho
triṇayana
prasīdeti krośan nimishamiva neshyāmi
divasān

as Bhartṛihari has it.

Even divine minstrels, according to Kālidāsa would daily fly to Gokarṇa *kshetra* to play the *vīṇā* to the deity there.

atha rodhasi dakshiṇodadheś
śritagokarṇaniketam īśvaram
upavīṇayītum yayau raver
udagāvṛittipathena nāradaḥ

—*Raghuvamśa,* viii, 33.

Several rivers, the confluence of rivers and sacred spots, were known by the appellation *tīrtha* and they were most sacred. If these were *sthāvara* or immovable *tīrthas*, the *guru* was considered *jaṅgama tīrtha* or a moving *tīrtha* and was shown the same reverence by *upachāra,* as for these *tīrthas* streams. When the *tīrthas* were so highly revered and played such an important role in the life of man in ancient India it stands to reason that there should be also, where possible, a visual presentation of some great *tīrtha* in India, and this we have. It is the confluence at Prayāga sanctified in Purāṇa, deep-rooted in faith as a great spot for pilgrimage. The most important description in literature of the commingling of rivers is that of Gaṅgā and Yamunā by Kālidāsa, and it is probably also the most picturesque. This glorious confluence of rivers, with an effect in colours realised by sight and not easily expressed in words, has been most vividly expressed by the great poet in his verses

Kvachit prabhālepibhir indranīlair
muktāmayī yashṭir ivānuviddhā
anyatra mālā sitapaṅkajānām
indīvarair utkhachitāntareva
kvachit khagānām priyamānasānām
kādambasamsargavatīva paṅktiḥ
anyatra kālāgurudattapatrā
bhaktir bhuvaś chandanakalpiteva
kvachit prabhā chāndramasī tamobhiś
chhāyāvilīnaiś śabalīkṛiteva

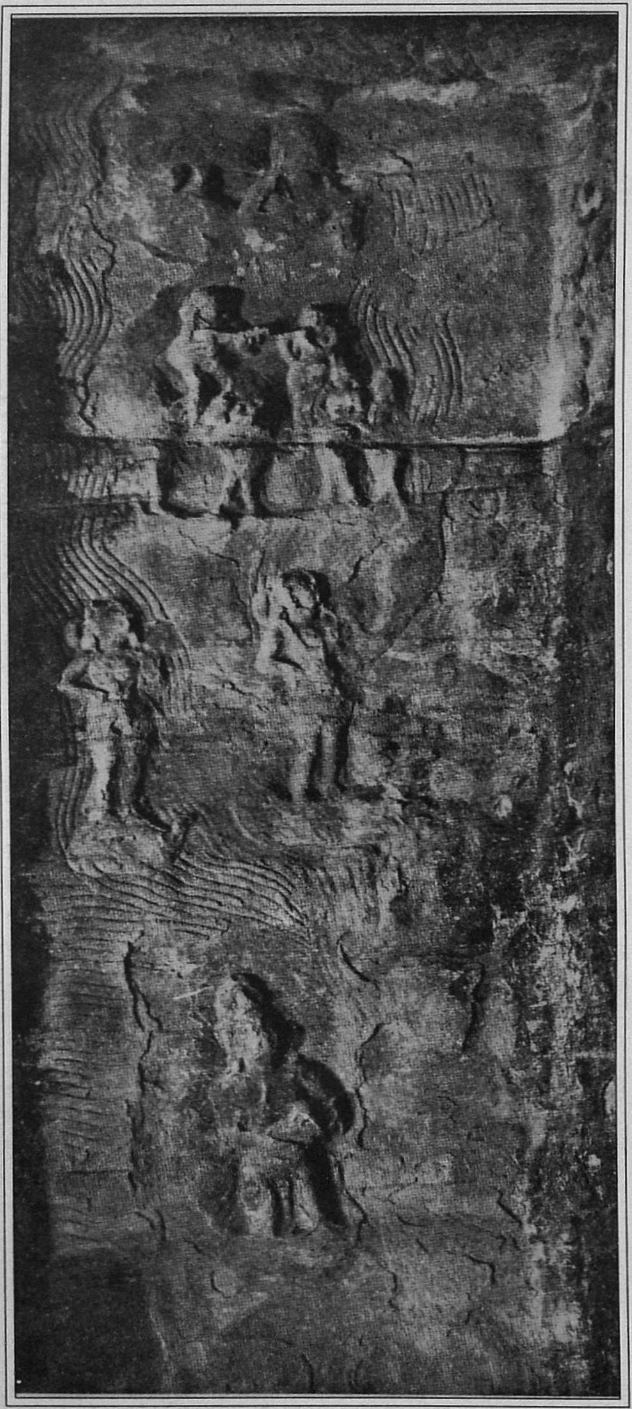


Fig. 23. Gaṅgā and Yamunā sangama at Prayāga on their course to Ratnākara or the ocean, Gupta, 5th century, A.D., Udayagiri, Central India.

anyatra śubhrā śaradabhralekhā
randhreshvivālakshyanabhaḥpradeśā
kvachich cha kṛishṇoragabhūshaṇeva
bhasmāṅgarāgā tanurīśvarasya
paśyāṅavadyāṅgi vibhāti gaṅgā
bhinnapravāhā yamunātaraṅgaiḥ
—*Raghuvamśa,* xiii, 54, 57.

In the next verse

samudrapatnyor jalasannipāte
pūtātmanām atra kilābhishekāt
tatvāvabodhena vināpī bhūyas
tanutyajām nāsti śarīrabandhaḥ
—*Raghuvamśa, xiii, 58.*

the sanctity of the confluence of the two rivers is clearly stated, mentioning a bath here more efficacious than even the attainment of the supreme knowledge, which assures release from the bondage of births and deaths and immortality. The sacred *kshetra,* the greatest among holy spots in India, visited by pilgrims, so eulogised by Kālidāsa, has been presented graphically in sculpture in the cave at Udayagiri in Central India (Fig. 23) in the vicinity of Mahāvarāha. Vishṇu raised Pṛithvī from the ocean and is the model for the great Gupta kings who rescued the earth and their own family and raised their royal glory to heights worthy of their prowess. In this context and in this scene Samudra is personified carrying a *ratnakalaśa* to suggest that he is Ratnākara. The rivers flow into the ocean and the streams are shown commingling their waters with that of the ocean. The two principal holy rivers, the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā, are shown standing in human form, each on her own vehicle—the *makara* and the *kachchhapa* respectively, on their own streams, which join and proceed to meet the ocean, also shown personified, standing to receive them. There is music, dance and festivity at the confluence of the rivers to suggest the worship of the rivers and the celebration of the festivity as pilgrims bathe. The result of this bath, immoratlity gained by becoming a divine being, is suggested by the immortals shown fluttering above the stream. This is a vivid picture of a great *tīrtha,* probably the most important in India, and probably the only one that has been so effectively presented in sculpture.

II NITYAKARMĀNUSHṬHĀNA (DAILY RITUAL) II

Snāna, Sandhyā, Sūryopasthāna and Japa: The *Dharmaśāstras* have laid great stress on the personal conduct and cleanliness of man from morning till night. His every action is governed by laws of cleanliness and godliness. It is these that constitute what is known as āchāra. A study of the *Dharmaśāstra* is very interesting for understanding the daily routine of man, as it was conceived and followed. There are several sculptures in India and in islands and countries on the sea, like Java, Bali, Ceylon, Malaya and Cambodia, which throw great light on some of these *sadāchāras*. For example, at Mahābalipuram, there is a very important carving known as Arjuna's penance (Fig. 24), from which, apart from the significance of the scene, we can learn so much about *snāna, sandhyā, sūryopasthāna* and *japa*. The scene is laid on the banks of the Gaṅgā suggested by carvings of *Nāgas* and *Naginīs* in human form with hoods over their heads. On the banks of this river there are Ṛishikumāras shown having their bath. One of them has finished his bath and is wringing his cloth. To understand this we should see the context in the *smṛitis* and *sūtras* about *vāsodaka*. Another has filled his pot with water to be taken to the hermitage for the daily *pūjā*. The significance of water, the vicinity of the river for carrying water for different religious purposes is given by Kālidāsa in his verse.

> *nirvartyate yair niyamābhisheko yebhyo*
> *nivāpāñjalayaḥ pitṛīṇām*
> *tānyuñchhashashṭhāṅkitasaikatāni śivāni*
> *vas tīrthajalāni kachchit*
>
> —*Raghuvamśa, v. 8.*

Another Munikumāra has his hands raised up and clasped, in an attitude, *yamapāśa mudrā*, to see the sun through the aperture so created. This is the usual thing during *sūryopasthāna* after the *mādhyandinasandhyā*, *sandhyā* worship at midday, and it, incidentally, also points to the time of day. By this device the sculpture interestingly indicates not only the time but also the particular *sandhyā* which is performed. The next stage in the performance of *sandhyā* is suggested in the figure of another Munikumāra close by, who is bowing to the four directions standing with his hands in *añjali*, saying *sandhyāyai namaḥ, sāvitryai namaḥ, gāyatryai namaḥ,* and *sarasvatyai namaḥ*, facing east, south, west and north respectively. The Ṛishis, several of whom are shown seated in the vicinity, near a shrine of Vishṇu, some of them with the yogapaṭṭa tied around their legs, some in yogāsana, according to their choice and covenience, are all of them engaged in *tapas* and *japa.* This sculpture is all the more significant when we compare it with the attitude of Ṛishis described by Kālidāsa in his *Kumārasambhava* in a similar context.

A sculpture from Barabudur, in Java, which shows boys at school, suggests that they are beginning their studies as the hands of all the pupils are in *saṅkalpa* attitude, the palms placed one over the other crossed, signifying their intention of study. To understand, again, this sculpture, we have only to refer to the *Dharmaśāstra* which lays down that on *Śrāvaṇapūrṇimā* day the *adhyayana* of *Vedas* and *Vedāṅgas* should be begun, and even today in India this custom is in vogue; and on *Srāvaṇapūrṇimā* day the *mahāsaṅkalpa* scene is a glorious one in South India, where several sit in a row with their hands clapsed in *saṅkalpa* attitude and repeat all that is uttered by the *āchārya.* Though there is no sculpture known in

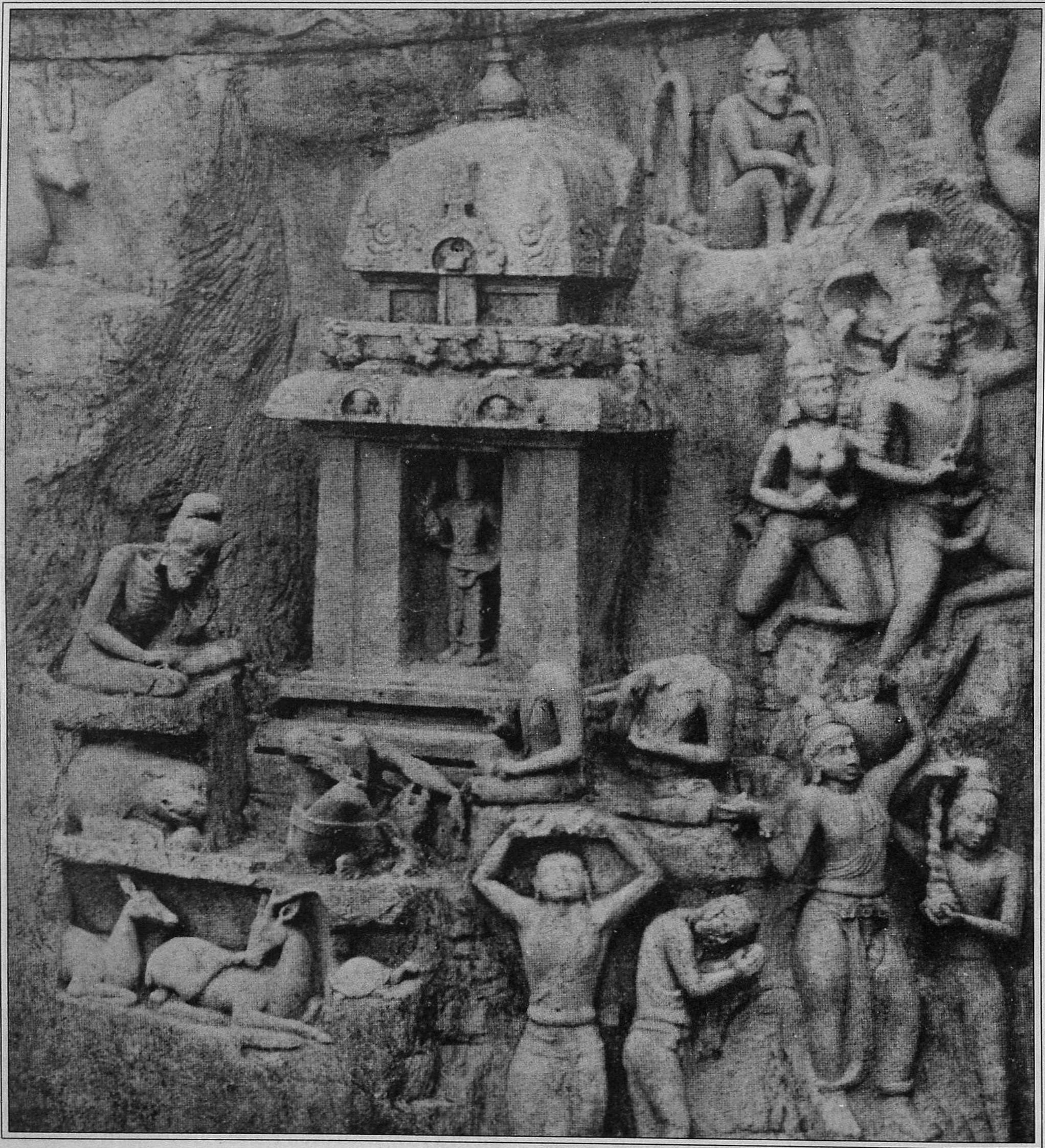


Fig. 24. Nityakarmānushṭhāna-snāna, sandhyā, sūryopasthāna, diṅgnamaskāra, vāsodaka, etc., Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahābalipuram, South India.

Fig. 25. Offering of ābharana (here Makuṭa) in pūjā, Eastern Gaṅgā, 10th century A.D., Bhuvanesvar, Orissa.

Fig. 26. Offering of toya (arghya, pādya, āchamanīya or pānīya) in pūjā, Eastern Gaṅgā, 10th century A.D., Bhuvanesvar, Orissa.

India to show this important religious *mudrā*, it is most interesting that we have it at least in Java, where Indian culture flourished for many centuries from the beginning of the Christian era. In the same sculpture at Mahābalipuram, where the line of Kālidāsa

brahmadhyānaparair yogaparair
brahmāsanasthitaiḥ
yoganidrāgatair yogapaṭṭabandhair
upāsitām
pādāṅgushṭhāgrabhūmisthais
sūryasambaddhadṛishṭibhiḥ
brahmarshibhiḥ param brahma gṛiṇadbhir
upasevitām
—*Kumārasambhava*, x, 46- 47.

is almost presented in tangible form, in the group of Ṛishis performing penance in the vicinity of the Vishṇu shrine, we have also, higher up, the form of Arjuna himself in severe penance corresponding to another line of Kālidāsa, describing the severe penance of the sage Sutīkshṇa

havirbhujāmedhavatām chaturṇām madhye
lalāṭamtapasaptasaptiḥ
asau tapasyatyaparas tapasvī nāmnā
sutīkshṇaś charitena dāntaḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, xiii, 41.

This is the usual pose in which ascetics in severe penance are depicted, and the *tapas*, amidst five fires, occurs also in some representations of Devī, in the attitude of an ascetic, as almost a poignant answer to the question in the *Kumārasambhava* .

Fig. 27. Offering of mālya in pūjā, Eastern Gaṅgā, 10th century A.D., Bhuvanesvar, Orissa.

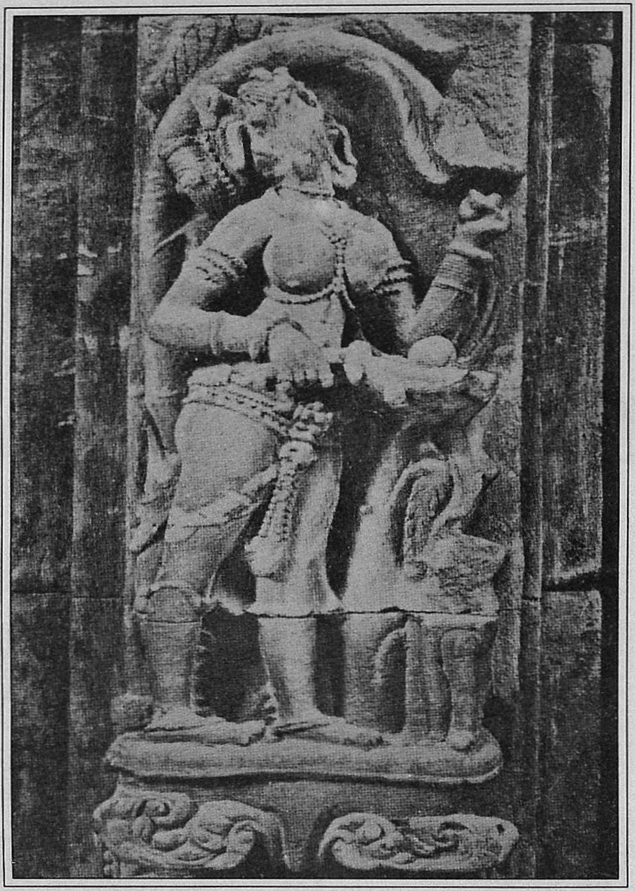


Fig. 28. Offering of dhūpa in pūjā, Eastern Gaṅgā, 10th century A.D., Bhuvanesvar, Orissa.

munivratais tvām atimātrakarśitām
divākarāplushṭavibhūshaṇāspadām
śāśāṅkalekhām iva paśyato divā
sachetasaḥ kasya mano na dūyate
—*Kumārasambhava*, v, 48.

It is the fierce asceticism of Devī presented in the scene where she stands amidst the four fires on all four sides and the sun scorching from above. A fine example of this form, from Mukhaliṅgam, is housed in the Madras Museum. There are several others also, of which one comes from a pillar in the temples of Ekāmbreśvara and Kāmākshī at Kāñchīpuram to which my attention was directed most graciously by His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya of Kāñchī.

The different *angas* of daily *pūjā* which, collectively, compose the ceremony of worship, are equally interesting and constitute the offering of incense, *dhūpa,* waving of lamps, '*dīpa*' the offering of flower garlands, '*mālya*', offering of food, '*naivedya*' and so forth. As part of worship, the *chaurī* is waved, the umbrella held, the banner shown, music played, dance presented and *kīrtana* sung. Some of these, we find represented in sculpture. It is interesting to compare various attitudes of representation of incense, lamp, food, garland, jewel, water in the conch and so forth, from sculptures adorning the Mukteśvara Temple at Bhuvanesvar (Figs. 25, 26, 27, 28). This is only one of the many temples with this theme, as it is a fairly

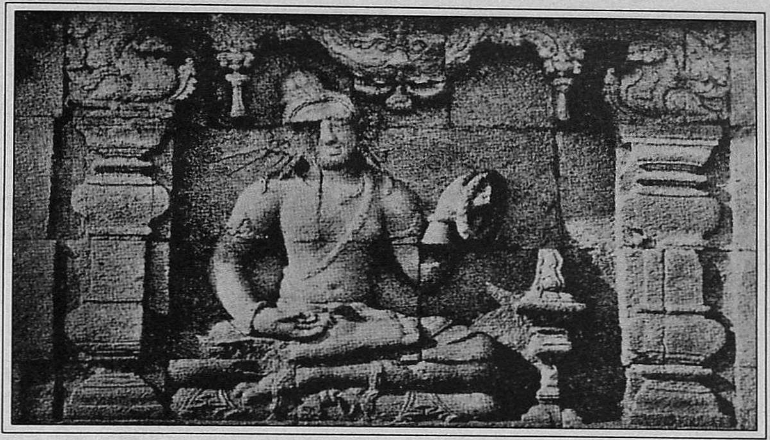


Fig. 29. Offering of mālya in pūjā, Barabudur, 8th century A.D., Java.

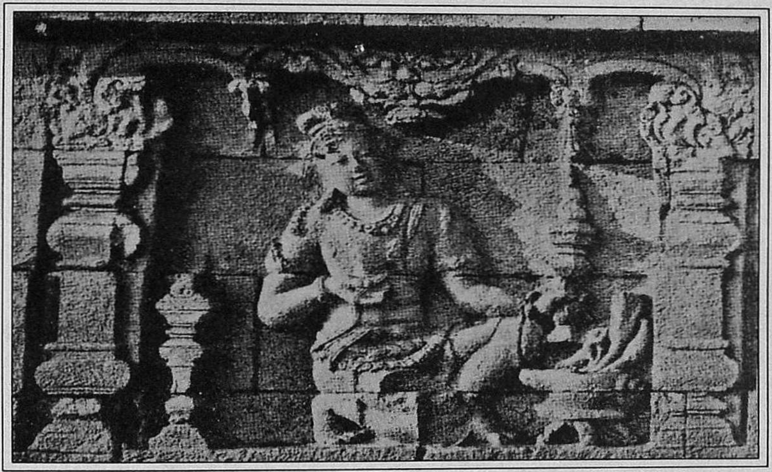
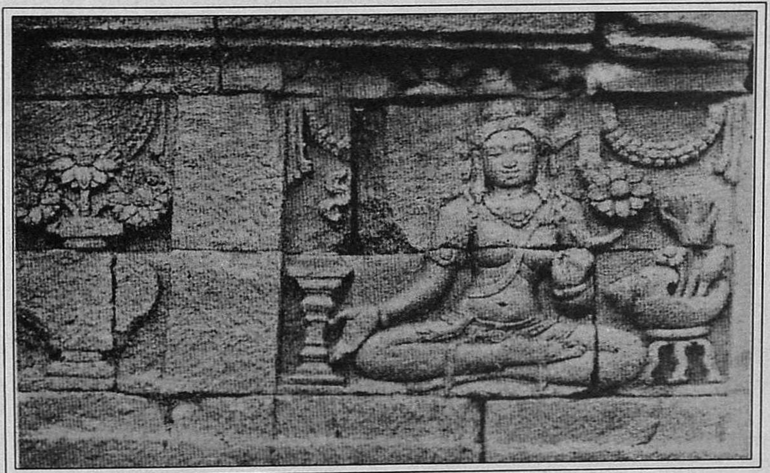


Fig. 30. Offering of dhūpa in pūjā, Barabudur, 8th century A.D., Java.



common thing, and occurs in several other places as well. Similar sculptures occur all in a row, all around the great monument at Barabudur, as adornments on the very first terrace of the *stūpa* (Figs. 29, 30, 31, 32). *Dhūpa, dīpa, mālya, naivedya, pānīya* in a conch, in short the entire *pūjā* ritual is represented in this great monument far away in an island on the ocean but so closely connected with India by cultural heritage.

A sculpture of Agni, originally in the possession of Sir Eric Geddes and now in the Cleveland Museum, is unique from the point of view of the study of *sadāchāra* (Fig. 33). The life of a *Brahmachārin* is probably nowhere so well represented as here, on either side of the figure of Agni, where there are small panels, one below the other, showing scenes from the life of a pupil. In this the position of the pupil in the presence of his *guru,* or master, is well represented.

He sits, on a less elevated seat than his master, with his hands in an attitude of obedience, and the guru holds his hand in the attitude of teaching. The *brahmāñjali* of the pupil here shows how respectfully he receives the *brahma vidyā* that is offered by the master. His dress should be as simple as his heart pure.

brahmāñjalikṛitodhyāpyo laghuvāsā jitendriyaḥ

—*Manusmṛiti,* ii, 70.

Before and after his studies the student is expected to bow to the master and in that process repeat his name, *pravara,* and *charaṇa* and, in so doing, touch the feet of the master,

Fig. 31. Offering of toya in śankha, Barabudur, 8th century A.D., Java.

Fig. 32. Offering of dīpa in pūjā, Barabudur, 8th century A.D., Java.

crossing his hands so that the right hand touches the right foot of the teacher and the left the left. This is most beautifully presented in this sculpture which, without the verses

brahmārambhevasāne cha
pādau grāhyau guros sadā
samhatya hastāvadhyeyam
sa hi brahmāñjalis smṛitaḥ
vyatyastapāṇinā kāryam
upasaṅgrahaṇam guroḥ
savyena savyas sprashṭavyo
dakshiṇena cha dakshiṇaḥ
—*Manusmṛiti*, ii, 71, 72.

from the *Manusmṛiti* being brought to one's mind, cannot be understood in its full significance. Even the *vandana*, the *sāshtāṅga praṇāma*, as it is known, to the minute detail of the proper hand touching the proper foot during the utterance of the *charaṇa* and *pravara*, is well portrayed in the sculpture. This kind of crossing the hands is known as *hastasvastika*, but *hastasvastika* not in dance, but in *anushṭhāna*. The simple dress, the low seat, *brahmāñjali* are all the rites, which included *ājyahoma* or *homa* with ghee in the fire, which normally was not usually done by the *Brahmachārin*. This is also depicted in the sculpture when the *Brahmachārin* is shown with *ājyapātra*, pouring ghee in the fire, in doing the *pūrṇāhuti*, *sapta te agne samidhas saptajihvās saptaṛishayas saptadhāma priyāṇi saptahotrās saptadhātvā yajanti saptayonīr āpṛiṇasva ghṛitena svāhā*.

The tending of the fire by performing *samidādhāna*, procuring food by *bhikshā* and attendance on the *Guru*

durād āhṛitya samidhas sannidadhyād vihāyasi
sāyam prātas cha juhuyāt tābhir agnim atandritaḥ
akṛitvā bhaikshacharaṇam asamidhya cha pāvakam
anāturas saptarātram avakīrṇavratam charet
—*Manusmṛiti*, ii, 186-87.

being the prescribed duties of the *Brahmachārin*.

agnīndhanam bhaikshacharyam
adhaśśayyām guror hitam
āsamāvartanāt kuryāt kṛitopanayano dvijaḥ
—*Manusmṛiti*, ii, 108.

Āchamana, or sipping of water, which is one of the most common practices preceding and succeeding every daily item like the bath, *sandhyā*, meals, and so forth, has sculptural representation in the panel depicting Gaṅgāvisarjanamūrti, from Ellora (Fig. 18), where Jahnu sips up Gaṅgā in one *āchamanīya*, Gaṅgā. Kālidāsa lays great stress on *āloka*, *avagāha* and *āchamanīya* of the sacred water of the Ganges and it is this *āchamanīya* that is given prominence in this sculpture.

Fig. 33. Agni with panels on the sides suggesting the life of Brahmacharya, Pāla, 9th century A.D., from the collection of Sir Eric Geddes, now in the Cleveland Museum, U.S.A.

|| THE POWER OF PENANCE-ṚISHIS ||

A spot that is fit for a sacrifice, according to Manu, is where the black antelope could roam peacefully, without fear.

kṛishṇasāras tu charati mṛigo yatra
svabhāvataḥ
sa jñeyo yajñiyo deśo
mlechchhadeśastvataḥ paraḥ
—*Manusmṛiti*, ii, 23.

The *Tapovana* of the Ṛishi is an exactly similar place where the deer is free to roam about. Dushyanta as he enters the *tapovana* with drawn bow, in his swift chariot, is stopped by a Ṛishikumāra, who warns him not to shoot the innocent deer of the hermitage

rājan! āśramamṛigoyam na hantavyo na
hantavyaḥ
—*Abhijñānāśākuntalam*, i.

To him an arrow in the tender body of the deer is like fire in a heap of soft cotton wool.

na khalu na khalu bāṇas sannipātyoyam
asmin
mṛiduni mṛigaśarīre tūlarāśavivāgniḥ
kva bata hariṇakānām jīvitam chātilolam
kva cha niśitanipātā vajrasāraś śarās te
— *Abhijñānāśākuntalam*, i, 10.

How else could he think of the deer when he was only accustomed to the sight of the pets lying across the doorway of the hermitage (Fig. 34) munching the *nīvāra* corn dried in the courtyard, to a share of which they were entitled.

ākīrṇam ṛishipatnīnām
uṭajadvārarodhibhiḥ
apatyair iva nīvārabhā-
godheyochitair mṛigaiḥ
— *Raghuvamśa*, i, 50.

The tender hearts of the Ṛishis, who would not mind the Kuśa grass, specially secured by them for their ritual, being nibbled by deer, and who would even allow the new born little ones shed their naval cord as they nestled in their laps

kriyānimitteshvapi vatsalatvād
abhagnakāmā munibhiḥ kuśeshu
tadaṅkaśayyāchyutanābhinālā
kachchinmṛigīṇām anaghā prasūtiḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, v, 8.

Fig. 34. Āśramapada from a panel on a pillar, Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D., Paṭṭaḍakal, Western India.

is only matched by the tenderness of the Ṛishikanyās that would immediately withdraw from the plants and trees after watering them so that the birds could drink water unafraid from the water channels around the roots.

Fig. 35. The true hermit impresses even animals, Śuṅga, 2nd century B.C., Bhārhut, Central India, Indian Museum.

sekānte munikanyābhis
tatkshenojjhitavṛikshakam
viśvāsāya vihaṅgānām
ālavālāmbupāyinām

—*Raghuvamśa, i, 51.*

A typical example of this is Śankuntalā, the innocent maiden of the hermitage, who not only knew how to love the animals and birds but also the very plants in the penance grove. Though, like those of her kind she was very fond of adorning hereself, she would not, because of her intense affection for the trees, gather even a sprout for her personal use, but would beam with pleasure at the very first appearance of flowers on the tree

pātum na prathamam vyavasyati jalam
yushmāsvapīteshu yā
nādatte priyamaṇḍanāpi bhavatām
snehena yā pallavam
ādye vaḥ kusumaprasūtisamaye yasyā
bhavatyutsavas
seyam yāti śakuntalā patigṛīham sarvair
anujñāyatām

—*Abhijñānaśākuntalam,* iv, 9.

In such an atmosphere of love even the *sthāvaras,* like plants and trees, reciprocate love, and it is no wonder that the Vanadevatās, with their hands peeping from the branches, showered jewels and costly silks on Śakuntalā as presents, to adorn herself, as she set out for her husband's home.

In this picture of the *tapovana* and the *āśrama,* where peace pervaded everything, there could be no scope for anything that was contrary to love and amity. The question of the powerful or ferocious and weak or mild could not arise amongst animals or birds. Rightly in such an atmosphere Kālidāsa could say

unām na satveshvadhiko babādhe tasmin
vanam goptari gāhamane

-Raghuvamśa, ii, 14.

In the panel from Deogarh representing Naranārāyaṇa (Fig. 37), where Vishṇu, in the guise of a sage, is expounding the highest truth, the atmosphere of the *tapovana* is vividly presented by the snake, the deadliest receptacle of venom, in the vicinity of the innocent and harmless pair of deer, and also by the tiger, with its terrible teeth, ordinarily a great source of fear, but cannot here excite any. This same idea is also repeated in later sculpture, as for instance in the case of Śiva as a teacher for the sages themselves, seated under the large spreading banyan tree as Dakshiṇāmūrti. The representation of Dakshiṇāmūrti from Kāveripākkam (Fig. 36), showing the innocent deer and venomous serpent together, like the deer and the tiger together and cat surrounded by mice in Arjuna's penance at Mahābalipuram (Fig. 20), is more or less a glorification of the *prabhāva* of *tapas* or penance. It is by *tapas* that Arjuna got his *pāśupata* weapon. It is by penance that Bhagīratha brought down the Ganges, the heavenly river. It is by penance that Bhṛigu, the son of Varuṇa, realised the truth of the Absolute. Ṛishis are shown in deep meditation, some of them with *yogapaṭṭa* bound round their legs in a *sthirasukha āsana.* Arjuna is, however, represented not in a comfortable seated posture but in a difficult attitude, standing on one leg, with arms raised, in the blazing heat of the tropical sun at midday, reminding us of similar sculptural representations of Devī performing severe penance amidst five fires, one of which is the

Fig. 37. Naranārāyaṇa; Gupta, 5th century A.D., Deogarh, Uttar Pradesh.

Fig. 36. Dakshiṇāmūrti, Pallava, 8th century A.D., Kāveripākkam, South India.

sun from above. And the sculptor at Mahābalipuram has drawn pointed attention, not only to the amity of the lion and the deer in the vicinity of the sages in penance, but has also shown how the atmosphere of peace, tranquillity and noble mindedness changes even such a hypocrite amongst animals as a cat into a holy being, deeply interested in penance, and following the example of Arjuna, standing up in a difficult posture for exactly the same purpose, not in the least ruffled by the antics of several mice running all around it, sniffing and frolicking fearlessly, with full faith in the saintly character of their erstwhile natural enemy. This small side panel in this major scene is to emphasise the overpowering influence for good and noble conduct that a band of saintly persons assembled for penance can spread around them.

A sculpture from Bhārhut, illustrating the *Bhaisa jātaka* (Fig. 35), shows the Bodhisattva,

who, though born with a silver spoon in his mouth, had given up all his wealth and treasures, for a life of renunciation with his sister, in a hermitage on the Himālayas, and so impressed even animals by his simple life that an elephant and a monkey also joined him to live a similar life; and when Śakra, just to test him, stole the share of lotus fibres intended for the meal of the Bodhisattva, even the animals joined the Bodhisattva's sister in taking an oath as to their innocence, regarding the disappearance of the fibres, and finally Śakra revealed himself and apologised to the Bodhisattva, explaining that he was only testing him. Such high notions of personal conduct in an animal like a monkey, that is ever ready for any mischief, only reflects the high potency of the atmosphere of virtue in a hermitage of true ascetics. The sculpture here, graphically presenting the animals taking oath, emphasizes this aspect of saintly life and its influence.

THE GLORY OF DĀNA

Man normally strives for his personal enjoyment. To deny oneself and offer another something is a commendable noble trait in man. This instinct accounts for the several *dānas* or gifts recounted. Of the donor and the donee, though on the same plane, the former is elevated, being in a position to give something which another could receive from him. The donee on the other hand goes down in the scale as, while receiving from another, he has lowered himself. Śri Harsha has a powerful plea in a verse of his *Naishadhīyacharita,* in which he wonders why and how anyone could have the heart to say 'no' to a supplicant, who has, as it were, already punished himself for begging by shrinking within himself in shame, and how fortunate the man who stands so high as to be able to help another—a rare privilege indeed, winning a thousand fold in heaven in return.

prāpitena chaṭughākuviḍambam
lambhitena bahuyāchanalajjām
arthinā yad agham arjjati dātā
tanna lumpati vilambya dadānaḥ
dānapātram adhamarṇam athaikagrāhi
koṭiguṇitam divi dāyi
dātur eti sukṛitair yadi kartum
pāralaukikakusīdam asidat

—*Naishadhīyacharita,* v, 84, 92.

However great and highly placed the supplicant, he goes down in the scale, and however low the person whose good fortune it is to be able to give to another, he elevates himself in a measure not easily imagined. It is this that is effectively presented in the beautiful allegory of the *vāmana* incarnation of Vishṇu. The sculptural presentation is sometimes more effective than even the literary one (Fig. 38). We have on one side in the panel the great Vishṇu as Trivikrama, the Lord, who, as his name suggests, is all pervasive and of a form mighty, like the universe, and on the other there is the dwarf, so small and puny, not of charming

Fig. 38. Trivikrama, Pāla, 8th century A.D., Bihar, Indian Museum.

demeanour like the noble Purushottama, but a short and miserable mendicant Brahmin, deformed in stature and outlook, begging for three feet of land of the great king of demons, Bali. Bali, as a dignified king and a man of his word, readily granted him his desire in spite of the protests of his priest Śukra, and that gives a picture of the personality, at once elevating, of the donor, who was after all a Dānava king, to be contrasted with that of the miserable dwarf, a form into which the lord of Viśvarūpa had shrunk when he chose to beg.

svamī san bhuvanatrayasya vikṛitim nītosi
kim vāñchhayā
yad vā viśvasṛijā tvayaiva na kṛitam
taddīyatām te kutaḥ
dānam śreshṭhatamāya tubhyam atulam
bandhāya no muktaye
vijñapto balinā niruttaratayā hrito hariḥ
pātu vaḥ

—*Subhāshitaratnabhāṇḍāgāra*, i, 65.

This is only a lesson and a very powerful one too, to show that, on no account, if one could help it, one should beg, but should readily welcome the opportunity to be in a position to give to others.

THE EFFECT OF SIN

Great stress has been laid on pure and unblemished character and there is truth in what Chārudatta gives, in a couplet, as his defence statement

apāpānām kule jāte mayi pāpam na vidyate
yadi sambhāvyate pāpam apāpena cha kim mayā
—Mṛichchhakaṭika, ix, 37.

The perfume wafted by good deeds spreads an aroma all around, the whole atmosphere is charged with it, and from a great distance it is experienced, as the *Taittirīya Upanishad* would have it

yathā vṛikshasya sampushpitasya
dūrād gandho vātyevam
puṇyaṣa karmaṇo dūrād gandho vāti
—Nārāyaṇīya yajñikyupanishad.

In the *Brahmānandavallī* of the *Taittirīya Upanishad* there is the picture presented of how the soul, with the bliss of Brahman, has no need of enquiring of itself whether it had done well in life and whether any sinful deeds could be attributed to it. It is a pathetic cry of the soul in a dilemma avoided by the bliss of Brahman.

etam ha vā va na tapati
kim aham sādhu nā karavam
kim aham pāpam akaravam iti
—Taittirīya Upanishad, iii, 9.

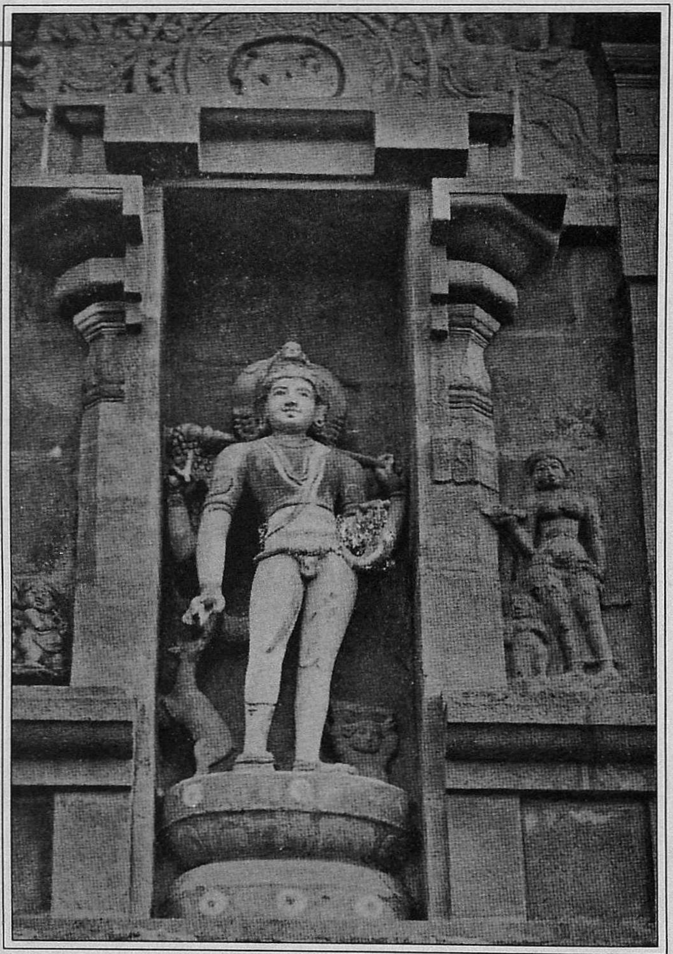


Fig. 39. Bhikshāṭana, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara Temple, Tañjāvūr.

Indeed the burden of the teaching in the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas* is that, even the highest that commits sin falls, and the most lowly that performs an act of merit elevates himself, whence by all means the attempt should be to avoid evil and do good. Bhartṛihari has clearly portrayed this in one of his memorable verses where he points out that even the highest gods of the trinity are not exempted from the operation of *Karma* and the example of Śiva here illustrates the point of the

fruit of sin most effectively.

brahmā yena kulālavanniyamito
brahmāṇḍabhāṇḍodare
vishṇur yena daśāvatāragahane kshipto
mahāsānkaṭe
śambhur yena kapālapāṇipuṭake
bhikshāṭanam sevate
sūryo bhrāmyati nityam eva satatam
tasmai namaḥ karmaṇe

—*Nītiśataka.*

This idea of Śiva as a beggar is more effective in the line of Kālidāsa.

digambaratvena niveditam vasu

—*Kumārasambhava,* v, 72.

More graphic and telling is the sculptor's picture of Śiva as Bhikshāṭanamūrti (Fig. 39) as a wandering naked mendicant, begging his food in a skull-cap, of which there are several fine representations in almost all the temples of southern India. If we go into the story of this form of Śiva the purpose for the presentation of this scene would be obvious. Śiva cut off one of the heads of Brahmā, and for the sin that he committed thereby, the highest of the gods though he was—*maheśvaras tryambaka eva nāparaḥ*—he had to wander the earth as a naked beggar. So this is a great lesson for avoiding sin of any sort. Just as the *mahimā* of a *mantra* could pull Karkoṭaka himself, into the sacrificial pit of Janamejaya, even when he wound himself around the throne of Indra, who offered him protection from the consuming fire, similarly the effect of sin was such that none, not even the highest, could escape it.

II YAMAPAṬA II

The text of the *purāṇa* in its abundant variety, as in the literature of the other sects, like the Buddhists and the Jains, has always admonished man on his conduct and life. It has always commended righteous conduct and abhorred and condemned wicked deeds. Right conduct has been the aim of all great teachings in the world and this has naturally been presented with a greater force by conjuring pictures of heaven and hell as reward and punishment respectively for good and bad deeds.

Several types of hell are known—sañjīva, kālasūtra, saṅghaṭa, raurava, mahāraurava, tāpana, pratāpana and āvīchi; this last is the worst and its hell-fire is notorious. Fertile human imagination has created as many different punishments as possible to frighten sinning people and similarly presented many visions of happiness for encouraging men to engage in good deeds and to avoid sin.

An interesting method of visually representing hell and heaven was conceived in India in the Yamapaṭa, which was a very popular theme (Fig. 40). The picture showman carrying scrolls containing elaborate scenes of the

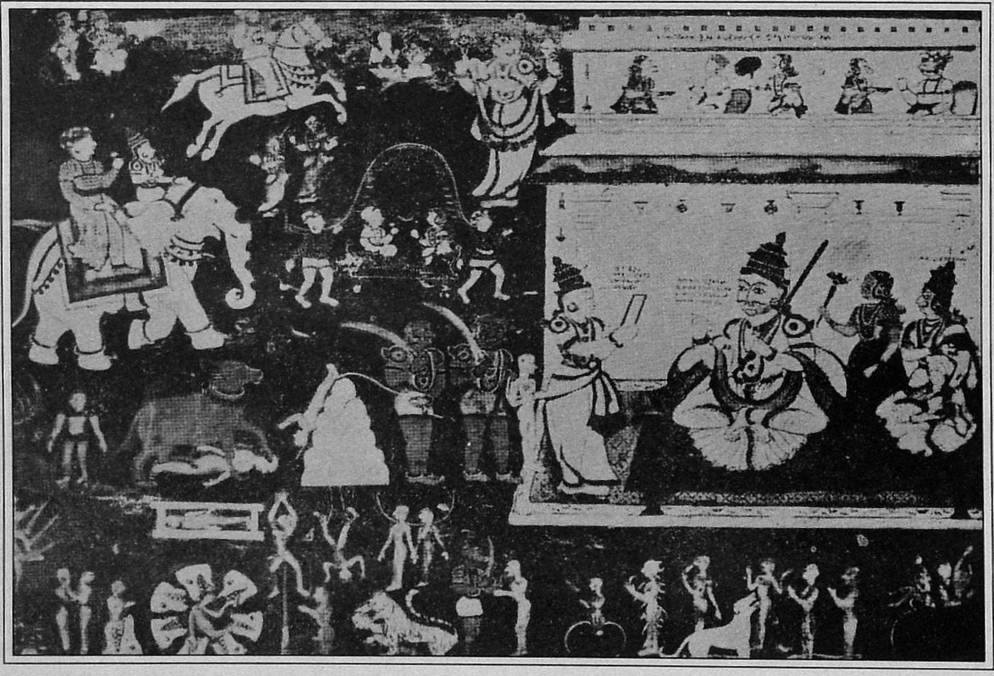


Fig. 40. Yamapaṭa, painting of the Deccani school from Cuddapah, 17th century A.D., Madras Museum.

torments inflicted in hell and the pleasures enjoyed in heaven in accordance with the deeds of individuals as fruits thereof, was a common sight in ancient India. A *Yamapaṭṭika* or a picture showman is introduced in the *Mudrārākshasa* of Viśākhadatta, as a spy, so disguised, entering the house of Chandanadāsa. The *Yamapaṭṭika*, as we gather from his remark, usually sang songs and explained them while showing his pictures. The scroll had to be unfurled for this purpose. Bāṇa mentions the *Yamapaṭṭika* in his *Harṣhacharita* as surrounded by many street urchins and explaining the significance of good and evil deeds and exhorting men to avoid sin and to strive in the path of fortune, adding colour to his exhortation by his impressive pictures and earning a livelihood for himself.

praviśanneva cha vipaṇivartmani
kutūhalākulabahalabālakaparivṛitam
ūrdhvayashṭivishkambhavitate
vāmahastavartini
bhīshaṇamahishādhiruḍhapretanāthasanāthe
chitravati paṭe paralokavyatikaram
itarakarakalitena śarakāṇḍena kathayantam
yamapaṭṭikam dadarśa

—*Harshacharita*, p. 153.

Such scenes occur not only in India but wherever the Indian sculptor has travelled, and as in the land of its origin, a whole gallery of sculptured *Yamapaṭa* is found on the base of the Barabudur *stūpa* which, before it was covered up to strengthen the monument, was carved eleborately with scenes from heaven and hell as described in the Buddhist texts.

The psychology of depicting such scenes for people with a religious bent of mind is to avail of the opportunity, when the mind is receptive, to present ideas that could have a permanent impression and so determine their future conduct.

AUSPICIOUS EMBLEMS

The *svastika* is amongst the oldest symbols in the world. It occurs among the early finds from Mohenjodaro. *'Svasti'* as its name indicates, is a symbol of *svasti*—well-being. *Svastivachana* is a very common element in Indian life and there are several hymns from which this *svastivachana* is repeated for the welfare of all beings. *Maṅgala* and svasti are the two auspicious words always pronounced without hesitation. Inscriptions very often begin with the words *svasti* and end with the same. Sometimes this *svastivachana* is written in so many words but there are several instances of *svasti* suggested by a symbol. *Svasti* is a common factor not specially claimed by any particular sect. It occurs alike everywhere in Buddhist, Jain and Brahmanical monuments. In the famous inscription of Khāravela, from Udayagiri, of the second century B.C., we find the symbol *svasti* and *śrīvatsa,* the symbol for *Śrī* (prosperity) shown at the beginning of the inscription (Fig. 44), meaning, thereby *svastiśrī,* the *svastika* representing *svasti* and *śrīvatsa, Śrī.*

Fig. 41. Śrīvatsa on Vishṇu's chest. Gupta, 5th century A.D., Udayagiri, Central India.

The symbol of *Śrīvatsa* is also very ancient. It represents the goddess of fortune Śrī and is her symbol. Just as Śrī crowns the gateway at Udayagiri in anthropomorphic form she is sometimes shown in her symbolic form, crowning the arch of chaitya windows, as for instance, at Amarāvatī. The *śrīvatsa* symbol, which is usually associated with Nārāyaṇa as *purushottama* and prominently shown on his chest, sometimes, as in the Gupta sculpture from Udayagiri in Central India (Fig. 41), is also shown on the chest of Jain Tīrthaṅkaras (Fig. 43), several early examples of which of Kushan date are found in Mathurā. Here the presence of the symbol is to indicate that he has all *Mahā-purushalakshaṇas.* In representations of Buddha, however, the symbol is absent on the chest of Buddha, as the cloak is always present on his shoulder and covers his chest, and this precludes the inclusion of the *śrīvatsa* on his chest. But we know that amongst several auspicious signs in Buddhist monuments, *śrīvatsa* along with *svastika* is prominent. This *śrīvatsa* in later mediaeval sculptures, in North India, occurs not only on the chest of Vishṇu, but on that of several other deities and is more or less a four-petalled lozenge-shaped symbol. In

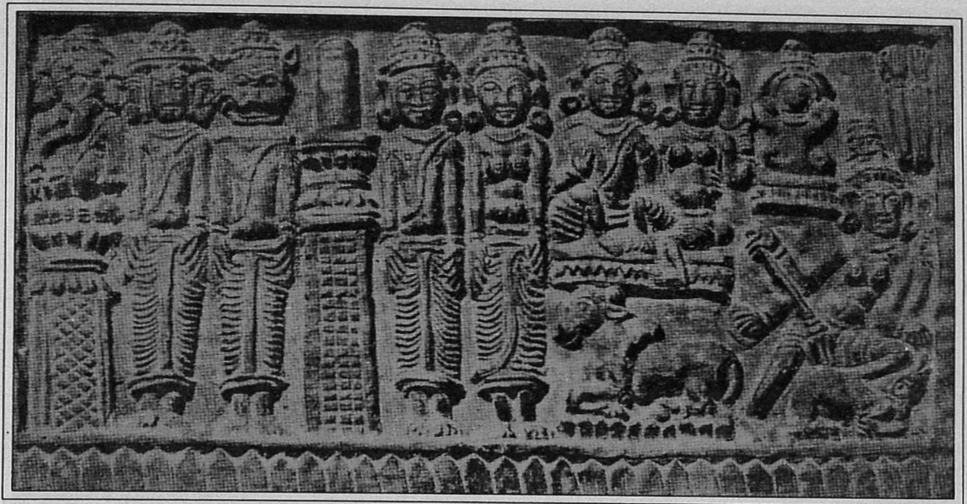


Fig. 42. Śrīvatsa on a plaque representing deities, Pallva, 6th century A.D., Peddamuḍiyam, South India, Madras Museum.

South India, however, the *śrīvatsa* occurs in a form not very different from the Gupta one, and clearly proves its association with Śrī by showing the face of the goddess very prominently, with the hands and legs curled up to form the *śrīvatsa* symbol.

This kind of *śrīvatsa* occurs on the chest of a beautiful Pallava specimen of Vishṇu in bronze, now in the Madras Museum. Earlier still it occurs in the plaque from Peddamuḍiyam (Fig. 42), in the manner already described, where except for the face of Lakshmī the rest of the torso is the *Śrīvatsa* symbol itself, and here also it represents Lakshmī or Śrī. Another Pallava bronze, a small piece form Enāḍi, and a stone sculpture of late Pallava date from Kāveripākkam, both preserved in the Madras Museum, show Śrī in this symbolic form. Later however the *śrīvatsa* symbol slowly develops into a conventionalised sign. It deteriorates finally into a triangular shape and this *trikoṇa*, or triangle, is finally the shape of *śrīvatsa* which is invariably found to the right on the chest of Vishṇu.

Pūrṇakumbha : The *pūrṇakumbha* is another great symbol of auspiciousness. The overflowing pot has always been conceived as a sign of plenty, as a symbol of the flow of prosperity. It is also a sign of the overflowing heart which accords a hearty welcome to the guest; and to suggest the full welcome, the *pūrṇakumbha* is generally shown on either side of the doorway. We find this in the earliest monuments. The *toraṇa* gateway at Amarāvatī is flanked by *pūrṇaghaṭas* and in several Chāḷukya temples the *pūrṇaghaṭa* is prominently shown on either side of the doorway, where occur also the *śaṅkha* and *padma-nidhis* (Fig. 8). Sometimes the *pūrṇakumbha* is shown carried by a beautiful Nāgarāja on either side of the doorway as in Polonnāruva in Ceylon (Fig. 46). Gateways are also shown flanked by Gaṅgā and Yamunā, the two favourite rivers, and even in their hands the pūrṇaghaṭa is shown sometimes, as the *pūrṇaghaṭa* suggests the river itself, as described in the *Vishṇudharmottara*, in the context of the iconography of rivers. The *pūrṇaghaṭa* is even today offered in token of hearty welcome to the guest in South India, and it is this custom that we find glorified in sculpture in one of the panels at Barabudur where a beautiful pitcher filled with lotuses is offered to the Master (Fig. 45). The *pūrṇaghaṭa* is always represented in this fashion, with lotuses and foliage issuing from it, suggestive of water that it contains.

The umbrella and the *chauries* (*chhatra* and *chāmara*) are symbols of sovereignty, apart from their being auspicious symbols, as above the imperial tiger (Fig. 47) and boar of the Choḷas and Chāḷukyas respectively.

janāya śuddhāntacharāya śamsate
kumārajanmāmṛitasammitāksharam
adeyam āsīt trayameva bhūpateś

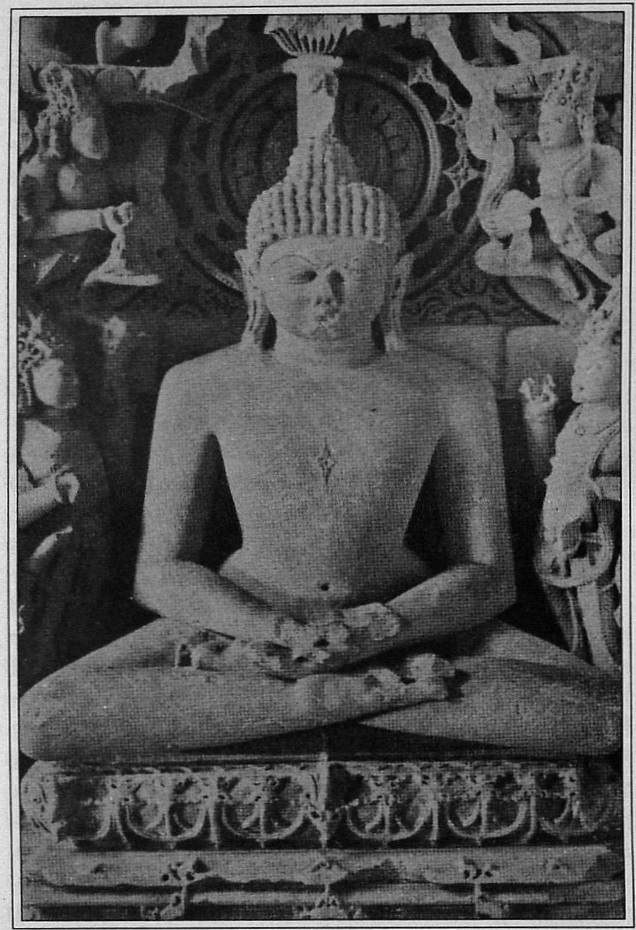


Fig. 43. Śrīvatsa on Tirthaṅkara's chest, Chandella, 10th – 11th century A.D., Satna, Central India.

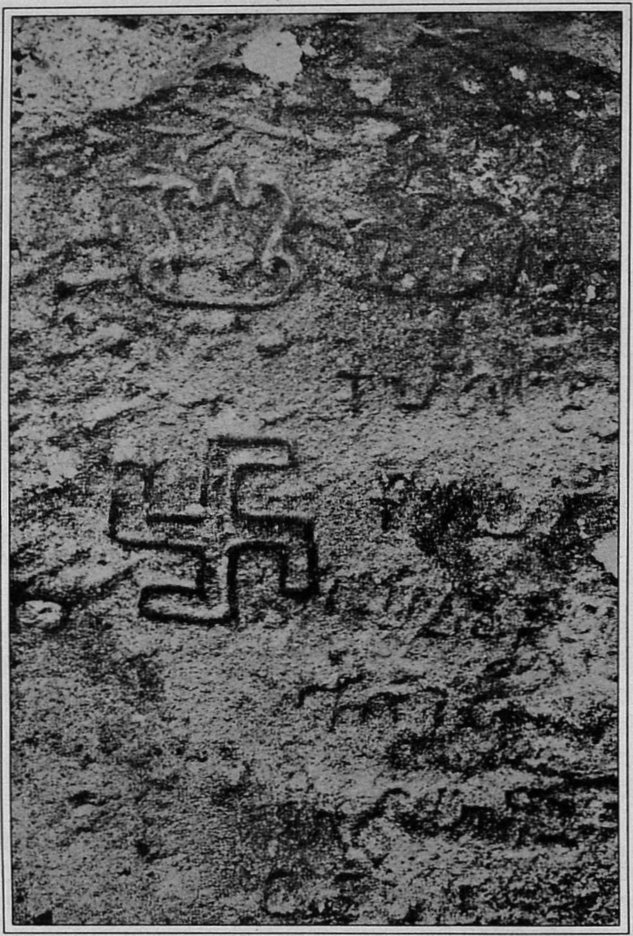


Fig. 44. Svasti and Śrī Symbols from Khāravela's inscription, Kaliṅga, 2nd century B.C., Udayagiri cave, Orissa.

śaśiprabham chhatram ubhe cha chāmare
—*Raghuvamśa*, iii, 16.

Kālidāsa thus enumerates the essential symbols of sovereignty. Daśaratha particularly stresses the umbrella

pāṇḍarasyātapatrasya chhāyāyām jaritam mayā
—*Rāmāyaṇa*, ii, 2, 7.

The white parasol was his canopy under which he sat till his hair silvered with age. What was required for the king, to exalt him in the eyes of the world, was all the more essential for objects of worship. That is why the *chhatra* appears along with ch*āmaras* above the figures of the deities in sculpture. It is sometimes not a single umbrella but double and even triple umbrellas held over an object of reverence. In early India the *Vṛikshachaityas* were great objects of worship. The trees were the abode of deities and even the deities themselves were conceived as trees. There are several early representations of *Vṛikshachaitya* trees as objects of worship, with umbrellas, *chaurīs* and garlands adorning them. In the context of the significance of these emblems, it is not surprising that these objects are found shown on the boughs of trees, and they are easily

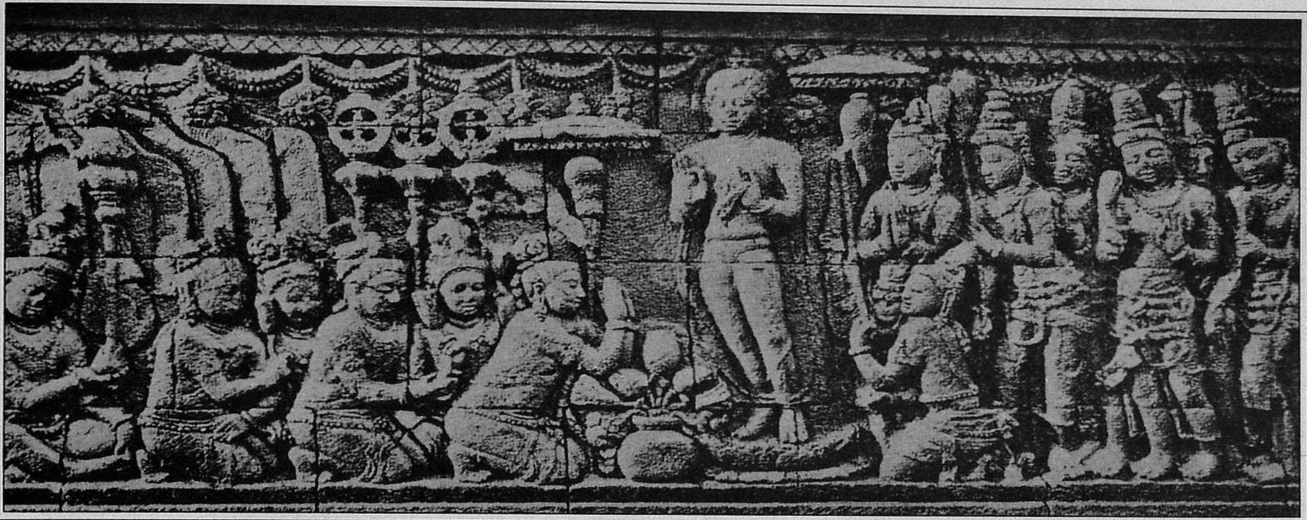


Fig. 45. Pūrṇakumbha offered to Buddha, 8th century A.D., Barabudur, Java.

understood. In the case of another object of popular worship, *Indradhvaja*, the long pole, the banner of Indra which used to be worshipped in autumn in ancient India, *chāmaras* were suspended from its top for this very purpose. That is why Bāṇa describes Śiva in his *sthāṇu* form, with the crescent moon on his head, as resembling the *mūlastambha* for the creation of this universe, decorated with chāmara.

> *namastuṅgaśiraśchumbichandrachāmara-*
> *chārave*
> *trailokyanagarārambhamūlastambhāya*
> *śambhave*
>
> —*Harshacharita*, i, 1.

The *chakra* or the wheel is an important symbol of great significance. It symbolises several ideas. Principally it is the solar symbol representing eternity, *kālachakra,* the wheel of time, the destiny of man in all his ebbs and flows in life, when he mounts up in fortune and goes down in adversity, as this wheel of life moves on, as we can recall from the verse of the *Meghadūta*

> *Kasyaikāntam sukham upanatam duḥkham*
> *ekāntato vā*
> *nīchair gachchhatyupari cha daśā*
> *chakranemikrameṇa*
>
> —*Meghadūta*, ii, 52.

The second connotation is that of sovereignty, suggested by the wheel of power. In several early carvings of Māndhātā, in Buddhist sculpture (Fig. 48), this wheel of sovereignty is prominently shown, along with other symbols of the emperor.

> *māndhātā chakkaratanam abbhukkiritvā*
> *attano parisaya pariyuto*
> *tāvatimsābhimukho pāyāsi*
>
> —*Jātaka,* ii (No. 258) text p. 312.

The wheel of power always moved according to his wish in front of him unimpeded. The name Chakravartī is itself derived only from the movement of this wheel of power, *chakravartana*. Vishṇu, as the Protector of the universe, and as the Emperor of emperors, carries the wheel which is symbolic of this power that he wields for the benefit of the universe. The Gupta coin, of the *Chakravikrama* type (Fig. 51), shows that it is from this *chakra* that the king derived his power—the wheel of power; and thus the wheel itself, as a symbol of power, is shown on a standard or banner on some Gupta coins, though their emblem was the Garuḍa and they had the *garuḍadhvaja*.

Another significance of this *chakra* is *dharma*. Buddha's first sermon at Sārnāth is

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Fig. 46. *Pūrṇakumbha carried by Nāgarāja, 4th-5th century A.D., Polonnāruva, Ceylon.*

known as *dharmachakrapravartana* and *dharma* is here suggested by the wheel (Fig. 49), which moves, and this movement of the wheel is the movement of *dharma*. In Brahmanical belief also *dharma* is just the wheel that moves; and Sūrya, the sun god, with a single wheel for his chariot, moves on watching the good and bad deeds of every one in the world, as in the Vedic hymn

> *ā satyena rajasā vartamāno*
> *niveśayannamṛitam martyam cha*
> *hiraṇyayena savitā rathenā devo yāti*
> *bhuvanā vipasyan*

and as in the line from the Madhuban plates of Harshavardhana

> *varṇāśramavyavasthāpanapravṛittachakra*
> *ekachakraratha iva prajānām ārtiharaḥ*
> *paramādityabhaktaḥ*
> *paramabhaṭṭārakamahārājādhirājaśri*
> *prabhākaravardhanaḥ*
> —*Epigraphia Indica,* iv, p. 308.

The single-wheeled Sūrya is the just Lord, who maintains *ṛita* (righteous existence) in this

Fig. 47. Chhatra and chāmaras on Rājendra Choḷa's seal for the Tiruvālangāḍu plates, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Tiruvālangāḍu, Madras Museum.

Fig. 48. *Māndhātā with his wheel of sovereignty and other imperial emblems, Sātavāhana, 2nd century B.C., Jaggayyapeṭa, South India.*

Fig. 49. *Wheel flanked by deer symbolising dharmachakrapravartana.*

world, and the solar wheel is thus symbolic of *dharma* also. It is also suggestive of light, celestial light, and the halo that we so often see in sculpture is just a glorified form of wheel, well decorated, and Kālidāsa never tires of using the expression.

mahīdhrapakshavyaparopaṇochitam
sphuratprabhāmaṇḍalam astram ādade
—Raghuvamśa, iii, 60.

for all that is divine and glorious which could have a halo all around it as in

spuratprabhāmaṇḍalamadhyavarti kāntam
vapur vyomacharam prapede
—Raghuvamśa, v, 51.

The *kamaṇḍalu* or water pot is also an object of great significance, apart from its auspicious nature. It connotes *dāna* or gift. In the scene from the Bhārhut sculpture of the gift of Jetavanavihāra to Buddha by the merchant prince Anāthapiṇḍika (Fig. 50), the presence of Buddha, as is usual in all earlier sculptures, has to be inferred only from the empty seat, and, in this case, in *gandhakuṭī*, the cell intended for the Master. But Anāthapiṇḍika himself is shown with the kuṇḍikā in his hand, pouring water and making his gift, after purchasing the garden at the fabulous price of gold coins spread on the entire surface of the garden. In scenes from Vessantara's life, the prince is always shown accompanied by an attendant carrying the water pot (Fig. 52). As the prince was so fond of giving away anything that he was asked for by anyone, the water pot was a necessary adjunct, as every time a *dāna* was to be made, water was to be poured on the hand of the recipient in token of the gift. In the scene from the story of Bali, where *Vāmana* is seen receiving gifts from the Asura Emperor, the water pot again comes into play. The *kamaṇḍalu* is therefore a sign or symbol of dāna.

Fig. 50. Anāthapiṇḍika's gift of Jetavana to Buddha showing the water vessel essential for pouring water to make the gift, Śuṅga, 2nd century B.C., Bhārhut, Central India, Indian Museum.

Fig. 51. Chakravikrama gold coin of Chandragupta showing the king deriving his imperial power from the wheel, Gupta, 4th century A.D., from the Bayāna hoard.

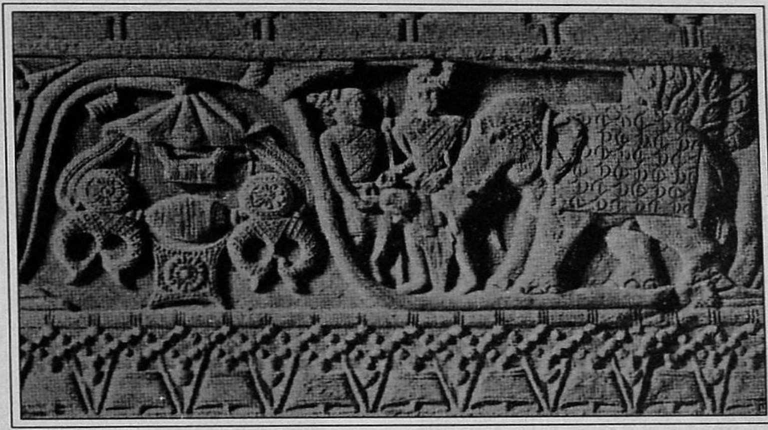


Fig. 52. Vessantara gifting the precious elephant : note the water vessel essential for making a gift, Śuṅga, 2nd century B.C., Bhārhut, Central India, Indian Museum.

On a fine early coin, about the 2nd or 3rd century B.C., now in the possession of Mr. Ajit Ghosh at Calcutta, there is a representation of a man with the water pot in his hand, which is associated with the *dāna,* and this, accompanied by a horse, symbolises the great *dāna* or gifts given by the king during the horse sacrifice or Aśvamedha or Rājasuya performed by him. It recalls the line of Kālidāsa in his *Raghuvamśa* describing the extravagant munificence of Raghu in the Viśvajidyāga that he performed.

> *putro raghus tasya padam praśāsti*
> *mahākrator viśvajitaḥ prayoktā*
> *chaturdīgāvarjitasambhṛitam yo*
> *mṛitpātraśeshām akarod vibhūtim*
>
> —*Raghuvamśa,* vi, 76.

|| ATTRIBUTES OF GOD ||

The Lord is conceived as the Absolute—*nirguṇa,* devoid of qualities and distinguishing marks, to be realised only by *anubhava* or experience. Even when some attributes are attributed to Him, He is considered the abode of *Kalyāṇaguṇas* or desirable noble qualities. A concept of God, except in some tangible form, becomes very difficult for the devotee. Therefore the immanent Supreme Being transforms Himself into forms for the *anugraha* of *bhaktas*. Even the highest *Advaitin*, like Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, cannot but think in terms of the beaming face of child Kṛishṇa in spite of all his flights of monistic thought.

> *vamśīvibhūshitakarānnavanīradābhāt*
> *pītāmbarād aruṇabimbaphalādharoshṭhāt*
> *pūrṇendusundaramukhād aravindanetrāt*
> *kṛishṇāt param kim api tatvam aham na jāne.*

But when God is conceived in *sarūpa* fashion there are different aspects of Him chosen and described by a distinguishing nomenclature so that the devotee could concentrate on each form according to his mental approach.

Fig. 53. Vishāpaharaṇa, Pallava, 9th century A.D., Madras Museum.

Embodiment of karuṇā—Vishāpaharaṇa : The great Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkshita in his prayer to Devī, clearly points out that without the grace of God it is difficult to be freed from the disgusting cycle of births and deaths.

> *trātavya esha iti chet karuṇā mayi syāt*
> *trāyasva kim sukṛitadushkṛitachintayā me*
> *kartum jagat tirayitum cha viśṛiṅkhalāyā*
> *karmānurodha iti kam prati vañchaneyam*
> —*Ānandasāgarastava 1.*

Viewed strictly according to exact standards of judgement probably everyone would be found wanting and it is only the *karuṇā* or mercy of the Lord that is the great hope for emancipation from all sin and attainment of the highest bliss. It is this aspect of God as the very embodiment of *karuṇā* which is more pronouncedly seen in the Vishāpaharaṇa form of Śiva. In his *Nīlakaṇṭhavijayachampū,* Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkshita gives a graphic picture of how there were enough gods to quarrel over the possession of precious objects like the *Kaustubha* gem, *Apsaras* or heavenly nymphs but not a single one was left when the *Kālakūṭa* poison came up to paralyse the entire universe.

Fig. 54. Gajendramoksha, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Deogarh, Uttar Pradesh.

When every god had fled in dismay and the world was helpless with great fear, there came on the scene the Lord, reassuring everyone, and ready to drink the poison to save total devastation.

dṛishṭvā kaustubham apsarogaṇam api
prakrāntavādā mithaḥ
gīrvāṇāḥ kati vā na santi bhuvane
bhārā divaḥ kevalam
nishkrānte garale drute suragaṇe
niścheshṭite vishṭape
mā bhaishṭeti girāvirāsa dhuri yo
devas tameva stumaḥ
—*Nīlakaṇṭhavijayachampū.*

This embodiment of compassion, saving the entire universe from utter annihilation, who drank up the deadly poison, is beautifully represented in sculpture in the Vishāpaharaṇa form, of which the most lovely representation is of the Pallava period. This bronze is a great masterpiece, now preserved in the Madras Museum (Fig. 53). Śiva is shown seated holding the axe and deer in his upper pair of arms, a snake in his lower left and a cup of poison in his lower right hand.

In Ankor Thom, where the temple is conceived as a lofty mountain like Meru or Mandara, and rows of Devas and Dānavas holding Vāsuki are introduced to suggest *amṛitamanthana,* the whole expanse is conceived as the milky ocean itself, the entrance tower with four faces of gigantic size composing its top suggest the four-faced form of Śiva ready to swallow the poison which sprang up along with other coveted objects. The theme was such a favourite and it appealed so much that it was conceived in a masterly fashion in this monument.

Bhaktavatsala—Gajendramoksha : As Vishāpaharaṇa, unasked, the Lord came to sustain the world from devastation all out of His own mercy and on His own account. When a devotee in distress seeks the aid of God by invoking Him, the aid is immediately given by the Deity with great joy, as He is most affectionate towards His devotees. It is given in the Rāmāyaṇa.

sakṛideva prapannāya tavāsmīti cha
yāchate
abhayam sarvabhūtēbhyo dadāmyetad
vratam mama
—*Rāmāyaṇa, vi, 18, 33.*

For anyone who considers himself one of the followers of the Lord, absolutely surrenders himself to Him and places all trust in His merciful protection, the Lord always assures succour. When the mighty elephant *gajendra* fought for quite a long time with the *nāga* that held him fast in the pond for a number of years, and finally, in despair, entreated the Lord to help him, Vishṇu descended from heaven posthaste to offer succour to the devoted animal. One should understand this in the spirit of an *arthavāda* and expound it as Śāyana interprets the *Vedic* line *gāvas satram āsata,* i.e. the cows performed a sacrifice, laying the emphasis only on the efficacy of the sacrifice to exhort men to perform it, suggesting that the fruit would be all the more for intelligent human beings when

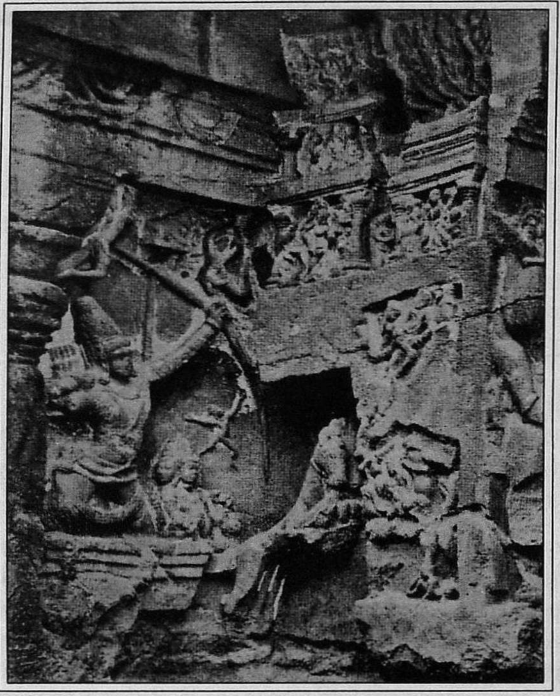


Fig. 55. Tripurāntaka, Rāshṭrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Ellora, Deccan.

even animals could benefit by it. Similarly here one can see that the Lord, when He was so benevolent even to an animal, should be all the more so to an intelligent being like a human who places his entire trust in Him. This great quality of love for the devotee in God is a re-assuring factor to the devotee. Probably Vishṇu as the saviour of *gajendra* is the most striking example of God's *karuṇā,* or mercy for the devotee, and the best example of this aspect of Vishṇu is the large panel on one of the sides of the Gupta temple at Deorgarh (Fig. 54).

Dushṭanigraha—Tripurāri : God is not only of the nature of mercy for the suffering beings in this world and not only responds to the plaintive cry of the devotee, but also aids the innocent good by punishing those who harass them. There are many instances of Asuras that were a terror to men and gods alike and the Lord had to transform Himself into several forms to put an end to their wicked activity. Some of the *avatāras* or incarnations of Vishṇu are for this specific purpose. Skanda was born of Śiva on the prayer of the gods for the special purpose of killing Tārakāsura. But probably there is no greater example of this great quality in God of the suppression of the unworthy than Śiva as Tripurāntaka. The concept itself is something beyond all comprehension. Śiva is the fighter. In the warrior pose of *ālīḍha* He stands on His chariot which is the earth on wheels composed of Sun and Moon, the horses yoked to it being the Vedas controlled by the charioteer who is Brahmā himself. In the hand of Śiva is the mighty bow *pināka,* composed of the huge mountain Meru with Vāsuki as the bowstring, the arrow being Vishṇu himself. With this formidable equipment Śiva is presented as the victor of the Tripuras, the Asuras who were a menace to the world. The Silpa texts recognize several varieties of this form of Śiva and there are several beautiful representations. Probably the most remarkable in sculpture is the one from the Ellora temple (Fig. 55). There is no more magnificent portrayal of the scene of the destruction of the Tripuras in painting than that from the Choḷa mural in the Bṛihadīśvara temple at Tañjāvūr. In metal the most magnificent figure is from Kūram that belongs to the Pallava period. Next to it in beauty but equal to it in iconographic importance is the metal image of Tripurāntaka from the Bṛihadīśvara temple with one of His feet resting on a dwarf.

Incomprehensible—Liṅgodbhava : God that is immanent is also not superscribed by any contour or form and is naturally formless, and incomprehensible. Even the highest denizens of heaven have failed to comprehend the supreme being. For illustrating this great quality of God there is a special icon known as Liṅgodbhava. A flaming pillar is shown in the center adored on either side by Brahmā and Vishṇu, the highest gods of the trinity, barring Śiva. The pillar is shown flaming on all sides and at its top is a swan flying and down below a boar burrowing deep. From the flaming pillar is shown issuing the standing figure of Śiva with one of His hands in *abhaya* or protection. The story goes that Brahmā and Vishṇu desired to see the top and the bottom respectively of a flaming pillar of

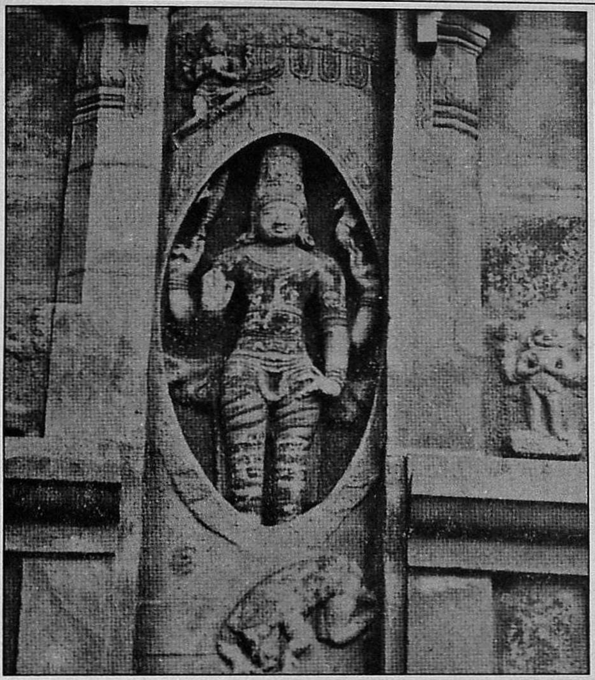


Fig. 56. Liṅgodbhava, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Tañjāvūr, South India.

gigantic proportions which arrested their attention, and roused their curiosity. The one soared up in the form of a swan and went up and up to dizzy heights and was still soaring while the latter in the form of a boar burrowed deep into the earth and went down, down and down to unfathomable depths. The former saw a petal of *ketakī* flower falling and proceeding downwards, and on questioning how long and whence it was on that downward journey, he learnt to his dismay that it knew not the several aeons it had been falling since it slipped from the top of the Śivaliṅga. Brahmā, who then realised the impossibility of his task, returned to find that Vishṇu had also similarly given up his task, and as they approached the flaming pillar, Śiva revealed Himself as the Almighty from within the pillar. He appreciated Vishṇu for honestly confessing his inability to go to the root of the flaming pillar but scolded Brahmā for uttering a falsehoold that he had reached the top of the pillar just on the word of the *Ketakī* petal which had dropped from it. This great concept of the incomprehensible nature of God, difficult for even the celestials to comprehend, is sculpturally represented in this form of Śiva. There are several fine representations of this in various places. A striking example comes from the Kailāsa temple at Ellora. In almost every temple in South India there is a representation of Liṅgodbhava at the back of the main shrine (Fig. 56); and just as Gaṇeśa, Brahmā, Vishṇu and Durgā are constant factors in a definite order all around the central shrine in their respective cells, the form of Liṅgodbhava has also its place and that is towards the back of the central shrine. This form is known and represented all over the land and there are fine examples from Orissa and Rajasthan. In this northern representation, however, the pillar is an unusually tall one and the figures of Vishṇu and Brahmā are shown on either side bowing to His incomprehensible pillar, against which the figure of Śiva is not shown, as in the representations from the South. The swan suggesting Brahmā is sometimes substituted, as in Orissan sculptures, by the squirrel meaning thereby that it is just an attempt of a squirrel trying to comprehend the root or the top of the Incomprehensible Object.

No likes and dislikes : The form of Śiva has a message to convey regarding a great quality of God. Nothing is favoured by His acceptance nor by His rejection as unwanted. In short, He has no likes and dislikes. On His matted hair, there is the cool and pleasant crescent moon, and close to this the snake, the abode of poison. The *dhuttūra* flower also adorns His crest. This flower is usually avoided and, if at all used, it is only medicinally. It has neither smell nor beauty and while there are varieties of lovely flowers it is this of all flowers that the Lord prefers. His body is smeared with ashes and He wears the elephant's hide as a cloth to cover His nakedness. The snake, shunned by all, and the moon, welcomed by everyone for the beautiful moonlight derived from it, are alike preferred by Him. While all the Devas would feast on nectar, Śiva would have poison for His breakfast. He neither enthusiastically welcomes nor rejects with disgust anything. All are the same for Him.

It is this that we find in the figure of Śiva's head with its adornment of snake, moon and *dhuttūra* flower.

Beyond three avasthās-Jāgrat, Svapna and Sushupti : The Lord is in a state which is beyond that of waking, sleeping or dreaming. He is in an ecstatic state which is beyond these regular states. It is to emphasise this that there are two great forms—one dynamic and the other static, but both symbolically representing the same concept. Naṭarāja is one and Raṅganātha is another. One represents Śiva as the Lord of dance (Fig. 58) and the other Vishṇu lying on the serpent couch (Fig. 57). Naṭarāja is the lord of dancers and Raṅganātha the lord of the stage according to the meaning of the words composing these two terms. The dance of Śiva symbolises creation, protection and destruction all in one, the drum suggesting creation by its main function of producing sound, the hand in the *abhaya* or protective attitude protection, and the hand carrying flames, death or destruction. The hand in *daṇḍahasta* points to the raised leg and assures liberation to those who adore it. He crushes ignorance in the form of a dwarf underneath his right foot and the crescent moon on his head symbolises the consequent dawn of knowledge which is bound to increase and culminate in the full moon or ripe wisdom. Raṅganātha lying on the serpent couch similarly symbolises

Fig. 57. Śeshaśāyī, Gupta, 6th century A.D., Deogarh, Uttar Pradesh.

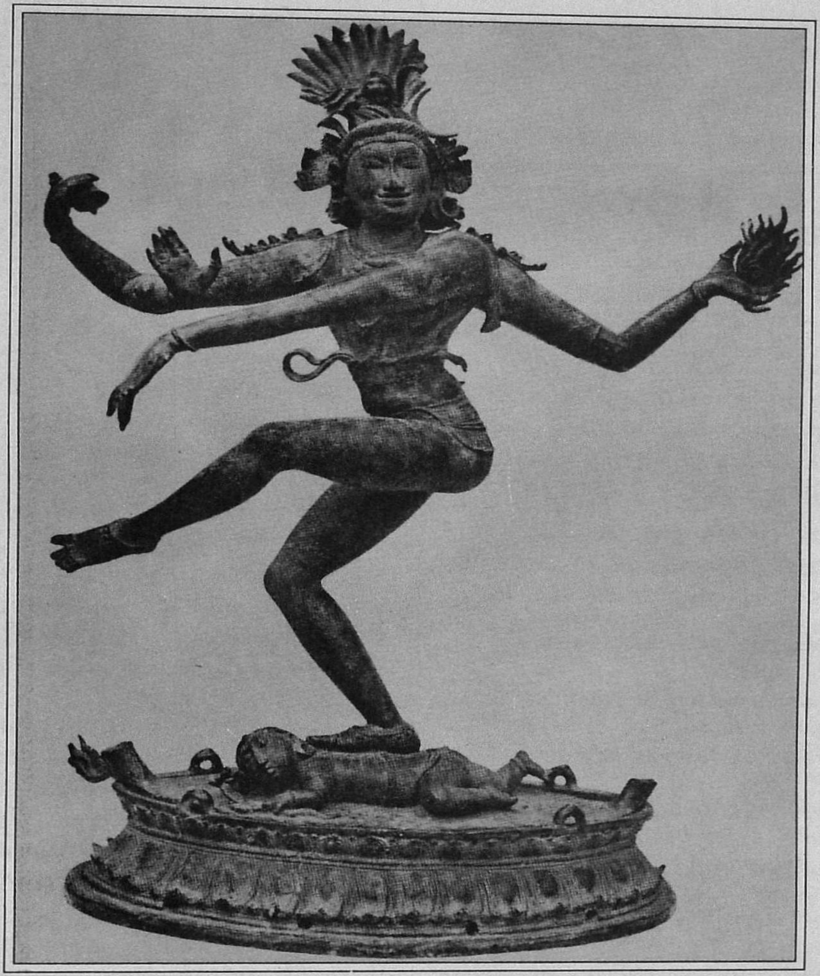


Fig. 58. Naṭarāja, Choḷa, 11th century, Tiruvālangāḍu, Madras Museum.

creation, protection and destruction. One of his hands in an attitude of protection suggests it, the lotus issuing from his navel, creation, and Madhu and Kaiṭabha near his feet suggest by their own doom, destruction. Rānganātha is neither asleep nor awake nor dreaming but He is in the *turīyāvasthā* just like Naṭarāja. But the one has tremendous movement and the other calm repose. These are great attributes of the Lord, depicted by means of an iconographic concept for easier comprehension.

|| SYNTHESIS OF CULTS ||

Though the Lord is incomprehensible, different attributes have been given to Him and devotees have preferred one or other of the forms of the Lord according to their mental outlook. Even in the *Vedas* we have the diversity of concept connoting a single potent factor in lines like

ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti
—Ṛigveda, i, 164, 46.

ya eko varṇo bahudhā śaktiyogad varnān
anekān nihitārtho dadhāti
vichaiti chānte viśvam ādau sa devaḥ sa no
buddhyā śubhayā samyunaktu
tad evāgnis tad ādityas tad vāyus tadu
chandramāḥ
tad eva śukram tad brahma tad āpas tat
prjāpatiḥ
—Śvetāśvatara Upanishad, iv, 1,2.

This naturally accounts for different creeds, with different ideology. In an atmosphere of tolerance and broad-mindedness these creeds could flourish without the least animosity or rupture. We have great instances, as for example Aśoka, who always mentions the Śramaṇas and the Brāhmaṇas together, though he was himself a follower of the Buddhist tenets. When we take the genealogical tree of Harshavardhana we can easily see how this spirit of tolerance was at work, as the father, son and brother represent three different creeds. The father was a Saura, a worshipper of Sūrya and his two sons Rājyavardhana and Harshavardhana were respectively Buddhist and Śaiva. On his mother's side, Prabhākaravardhana was descended from the Gupta family that was Bhāgavata, follower of Vishṇu. There are several other inscriptions which show that father, son and grandson represent different creeds but all working in harmony. We know that the Ikshvākus in the Kṛishṇā valley were great followers of the Brāhmanical faith, who had performed several Vedic sacrifices, but they were also great patrons of the followers of Buddha and it was the princesses of the Ikshvāku line that were responsible for the great *stūpas* at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa as the inscriptions clearly show. Earlier the Śātavāhanas were similarly sovereigns, who, though ardent devotees of Brāhmanical deities—the most famous image of the time is that of Śiva from Guḍimallam, and an inscription from Sthānakundūra or Tālgunda of the Kadaṁba kings mentions the worship of Śiva by Sātavāhanas at the place— encouraged and actively supported Buddhists and the several great monuments of their period bear witness to their tolerant spirit.

Coming to a later date, the great Choḷa King Rājarāja, who was a renowned *Śiva-bhakta,* and who had dedicated all his life to the construction of the great temple at Tañjāvūr, all the hours of peace that he could avail of in his life of martial glory, was so noble-minded as to not only welcome, but to provide every possible facility to the Buddhists from the Śailendra empire who came to his kingdom and requested his help in constructing their monastery at Nāgapaṭṭiṇam. The recent find of Buddha images from Nāgapaṭṭiṇam show how active the Buddhist *sangha* was at the spot, and from the copper plate grants of Rājarāja we know that he had made liberal donations of villages for the maintenance of the monastery at Nāgapaṭṭiṇam as a friendly gesture towards the faith. At the same time the sister of Rājarāja, for whom her royal brother had almost maternal

Fig. 59. Pañchāyātana, Pāla, 12th century A.D., Bihar, Indian Museum.

affection and regard, was responsible for the rich endowments and constructions of Jain temples, as at Tirumalai near Polūr, though the princess was herself of the Brāhmanical faith.

Still later there is a striking picture of the Vijayanagar period which shows how king Venkaṭapati Rāya called quarrelling Jains and Vaishṇavas together, through their religious leaders, and made them shake hands in token of friendship. He demanded it as a matter of political security since religious squabbles were not conducive to the growth of healthy social instincts. Against a background of this social picture we can understand several interesting sculptures which have a real moral story to narrate.

Pañchāyātana : There is a sculpture from Bihar in the Indian Museum, which, for its artistic quality, may not invite great attention, but iconographically it is important (Fig. 59). More important than this is the fact that it shows the synthesis of several elements of religious belief. It is shaped like a liṅga with carvings on all the four sides. These represent Sūrya, Devī, Vishṇu and Gaṇeśa and the entire block is shaped like a liṅga to signify Śiva. Now, we know that Śaṅkara, when he travelled all over the land to establish his *advaitic* doctrine, found different sects, sometimes very friendly but mostly in a militant attitude; and as he did not approve of even the slightest animosity amongst the several creeds, who only worshipped the formless in convenient concepts according to their predilection, decided to combine all the elements, at the same time suggesting it as the formless, shapeless *Śivaliṅga* symbolising Śiva the One and Absolute that composes the other four elements as well—Gaṇeśa, Devī, Vishṇu and Sūrya, and this was to be worshipped; and so came into vogue the worship of pebbles representing the deities—Śiva as an ovoid pebble, Vishṇu as a piece of ammonite, Sūrya as a bit of crystal, Gaṇeśa as a fragment of carnelian and Devī as a piece of luminous stone. This is the usual Pañchāyātana which constitutes the regular household worship in *Smārta* households in South India. The present sculpture from Bihar is an interesting representation of Pañchāyātana with the deities carved in their respective iconographic form on the four sides so that the concept may be more appealing to the less advanced devotee, as it is not always possible for everyone to comprehend the Almighty except in some tangible form.

Chaturmukha of Sūrya : There is a very interesting hymn repeated during *sandhyā* every day which eulogises the sun as only another form of Śiva, Vishṇu and Brahmā—forms assumed for the creation, protection and destruction of the universe.

namassavitre jagadekachakshushe
jagatprasūtisthitināśahetave
trayīmayāya triguṇātmadhāriṇe
viriñchinārāyaṇaśaṅkarātmane

Fig. 60. Chaturmukha Sūrya, 6th century, A.D., Java, Indian Museum.

svayambhuve dīptasahasrachakshushe
surottamāyāmitatejase namaḥ.

This is a very important hymn as it has its sculptural representation in several places not only in India but even abroad, wherever Indian thought and culture has travelled. Thus the Indian Museum possesses a beautiful carving representing a *Śivaliṅga* on the four sides of which there are carvings of Sūrya, Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva. This comes from Java and from the workmanship it is very clear that it belongs to the Gupta period (Fig. 60). Later representations of the same concept are found in many places in Rajasthan, as for instance, in Osia near the Sachīmātā Temple.

The source for this synthesis must be sought even about the beginning of the Christian era at Amarāvatī. The flaming pillar represents Buddha. This flaming pillar rests on a pair of feet on a lotus and on its top is a wheel surmounted by a trident. In this flaming pillar Buddha is sought to be eulogized, as he is conceived as combining in himself all the elements of Brahmā, Vishṇu, Rudra, Agni and Sūrya and even transcending them in his glory. Whatever that may be, it is interesting to see that the lotus, the birth place of Brahmā symbolises him, the flaming pillar Rudra and Agni in the form of a sacrificial post, the feet Vishṇu in his aspect as Trivikrama taking the powerful strides, the wheel Sūrya, and the trident the *Triratna* on the top of all this.

Śiva, Sūrya and Buddha : There is another sculpture in the Indian Museum which shows the Harihara form in the centre and Sūrya and Buddha on either side (Fig. 61). To understand the significance of this sculpture we have to see the background against which the creation of such a sculpture was made possible. When we refer to the Banskhera or Madhuban plates of Harshavardhana we can see that Prabhākaravardhana, the father of Harshavardhana is styled *Mahārājādhirāja Paramādityabhakta Śrī Prabhākaravardhana.* Harshavardhana's elder brother Rājyavardhana is *Mahārājādhirāja Paramasaugata Śrī Rājyavardhana.* Harshavardhana himself is *Mahārājādhirāja Paramamāheśvara Śrī Harshavardhana.* The mother of Prabhākaravardhana was of the Gupta line; and the Guptas we know, were *Paramabhāgavatas.* Prabhākaravardhana himself was a worshipper of the Sun, his elder son belonged to the Buddhist faith and Harshavardhana was a devotee of Maheśvara and Rājyaśrī, the sister of Harshavardhana, was married to Grahavarman Maukharī whose family was *Paramamāheśvara.* Brothers and sisters, parents and children, whose bonds of affection were the closest, agreed to differ in matters of faith and it is in this spirit of tolerance that such sculptures could be created. In fact, the

Fig. 61. Harihara, flanked by Sūrya and Buddha, Pāla, 9th–10th century A.D., Bihar, Indian Museum.

sculpture itself belongs to a slightly later date but is still a product of that atmosphere. We can here note that Harihara represents a combination in itself of the Vaishṇava and Śaiva elements and on either side Sūrya and Buddha represent the creed of the Sauras and the Saugatas.

It is this happy blending of different shades of thought and modes of worship that has assured, to the extent that it could, a sense of tolerance and an atmosphere of peace and good-will. Though, of course, it cannot be denied that the very presence of different sects was responsible for several petty differences, which occasionally resulted in, not only intellectual, but even physical outbursts, to the disadvantage of all the parties, it is also the spirit of tolerance that has consistently presented itself, which has very often spread its soothing and softening influence in minimising such clashes, and the sculptures just discussed are tangible evidence of this spirit of tolerance and brotherhood of faiths.

COW AND SAINT-GO-BRĀHMAṆA

The cow has been an object of veneration and rightly Kālidāsa makes a powerful plea for her adoration in the first two cantos of the *Raghuvamśa.* King Dilīpa obtains his long desired progeny only through the grace of the cow that he worshipped at the instance of sage Vaśishṭha. The mighty prince so born was the progenitor of the race of Raghu which forms the theme of the greatest masterpiece of this great poet. It is no wonder that Kālidāsa has specially used forceful language to convey the greatness of the cow, and asks the world not to consider her a mere source of milk, as she is, if properly kept and looked after, the wishfulfilling heavenly cow herself.

na kevalānām payasām prasūtim avehi
mām kāmadughām prasannām
—*Raghuvamśa,* ii, 63.

And it stands to reason that the great king, who freely satisfied the desires of every supplicant, himself folded his hands—hands with which he won for himself unique distinction as a hero—and prayed of the cow a son by his queen who would be the progenitor of a great race with never-ending fame.

tatas samānīya sa mānitārthī hastau
svahastārjitavīraśabdaḥ
vamsaśya kartāram anantakīrtim
sudakshiṇāyām tanayam yayāche
—*Raghuvamśa,* ii, 64.

The cow was as it were the secret of success in ancient India. For all the obligatory rites and ceremonies like the *pañchamahāyajñas* for the *ājya* and *havis* for the *yajña* for the Devas, for the *kavya* for the Pitris, for the *madhuparka* and other offerings in welcoming the guests in *atithi pūjā* and for *bhūtabali* or feeding the birds and animals, milk products were essential, and the cow that gave them was indeed most gratefully worshipped. The king on earth could do no better than follow the cow, for protecting her, as she was the means of proper performance of the ceremonies pertaining to the gods, manes and guests.

tām devatāpitratithikriyārthām anvag yayau
madhyamalokapālaḥ
babhau cha sā tena satām matena
śraddheva sākshād vidhinopapannā
—*Raghuvamśa,* ii, 16.

The warm milk flowing from her full udder at the sight of her calf was more sacred than the *avabhṛitasnāna*, the purificatory bath after a sacrifice. The dust raised by her hoofs was as purifying as a bath in a holy river or lake.

bhuvam koshṇena kuṇḍodhnī
medhyenāvabhṛitādapi
prasnavenābhivarshantī
vatsālokapravartinā
rajaḥkaṇaiḥ khuroddhūtais spṛiśadbhir
gātram antikād
tīrthābhishekajām śuddhim
ādadhānā mahīkshitaḥ
—*Raghuvamśa,* 1, 84, 85.

The cow well looked after was sleek and fine looking, and the picture of the cow presented by Kālidāsa is a very charming one, an animal of ample proportions with her udder large as a pot—*kuṇḍodhnī.* Her movement was rather slow as she was of heavy build.

āpīnabhārodvahanaprayatnād gṛishṭir
gurutvād vapusho narendraḥ
ubhāvalañchakratur añchitābhyām
tapovanāvṛittipatham gatābhyām
—*Raghuvamśa,* ii, 18.

The very pastures where she roamed for grazing were purified by her movement.

sañchārapūtāni digantarāṇi kṛitvā dinānte nilayāya gantum
prachakrame pallavarāgatāmrā prabhā pataṅgasya muneś cha dhenuḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, ii, 15.

Not only was the cow well looked after with personal attention, when she was out grazing but, even at home, her shed was carefully attended to and in the evening a special lamp was lit for guarding her from insects, reptiles and other destructive agencies, and the lamp itself was placed as a worshipful offering.

tām antikanyastabalīpradipām anvāsya goptā gṛihiṇīsahāyaḥ
krameṇa suptām anu samviveśa suptotthitām prātar anūdatishthat
—*Raghuvamśa*, ii, 24.

The climax of this worship of the sacred animal is beautiful in the picture of queen Sudakshiṇā, and king Dilīpa adoring her, the one welcoming her standing in front of her and the other following her as her protector, the queen walking around her in perambulatory fashion with a vessel of *akshatas* in her hand to worship the space between her horns which was, as it were, the gateway for success.

puraskṛitā vartmani pārthivena pratyudgatā pārthivadharmapatnyā
tadantare sā virarāja dhenur dinakshapāmadhyagateva sandhyā
pradakshiṇīkṛitya payasvinīm tām sudakshiṇā sākshatapātrahastā
praṇamya chānarcha viśālam asyās śṛiṅgāntaram dvāramivārthasiddheḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, ii, 20, 21.

This important idea of the horns of the cow forming, as it were, the gate for success should account in some manner for the term *gopura* which signifies the gateway of a city, temple or palace. However that may be, it is interesting to find that this idea in the verse of Kālidāsa has been specially commented on in a representation of the cow in one of the early tribal coins, that of Amoghabhūti (Fig. 64). In this coin of the Kuṇinda king Amoghabhūti, his unfailing fortune is symbolised by the cow of plenty with a lady beside her, suggesting Pṛithvī or earth personified, who assumed the form of a cow (Fig. 62). Kālidāsa's lines

nivartya rājā dayitām dayālus tām saurabheyīm surabhir yaśobhiḥ
payodharībhūtachatussamudrām jugopa gorūpadharām ivorvim
—*Raghuvamśa*, ii, 3.

make it very clear why these figures are shown together like this. The fact that the lady holds a lotus in her hand in front of the cow and a Śrīvatsa mark, the symbol of Lakshmī, is shown between the horns is an indication of the fusion of the concept of Pṛithvī as a cow and her identity with Śrī as Rājyaśrī royal prosperity that was so assiduously guarded by the king. Her association with the Lady of Auspiciousness is also clear in the line

adūravartinīm siddhim rājan vigaṇayātmanaḥ
upasthiteyam kalyāṇī nāmni kīrtita eva yat
—*Raghuvamśa*, i, 87.

while her special request to reside in the cow is mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*, xiii.

śrīḥ kṛitveha vapuḥ kāntam gomayeshu viveśa ha
ichchhāmi chāpi yushmāsu vastum sarvāsu nityadā
āgatya prārthaye yushmānchrījushṭā bhavatātha vai.

The particular spot between the horns chosen for presenting *śrīvatsa* is to stress that that was the gateway for *siddhi* which is again associated with prosperity or Śrī. *Śṛīṅgāntaram dvāram ivārthasiddheḥ*.

In considering this type of coin we have to take into account the numerous tribal coins of India of about the beginning of the Christian era with a cow shown beside a tree within a railing or both back to back on obverse and reverse. To understand this again we have only to refer to Kālidāsa whose description of the heavenly cow places her under the shade of the *Kalpataru* or wish–fulfilling tree.

Fig. 62. Devas along with the Earth as a cow approach Śeshaśāyī Vishṇu, Kāngra School, 18th century A.D., National Musuem.

Fig. 63. The cow as the abode of all deities, Marāṭhā School, 19th century A.D., collection of Sri Y. G. Doraiswami, Madras.

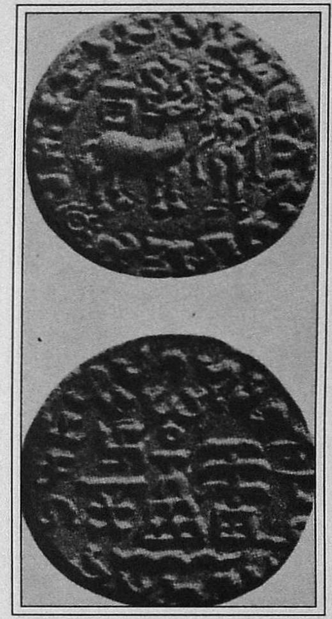


Fig.64. Silver coin of Amoghabhūti, Kuṇinda, Tribal coin, 1st century B.C., obverse showing cow to left, female figure standing facing holding flower in uplifted right hand, symbols above back of cow and horns, legend in Brāhmī. Rājñah Kuṇindasa Amoghabhūtisa Mahārājasa, Cat. Ind. Coins.

āsīt kalpataruchchhāyāmāśritā surabhiḥ
pathi
—*Raghuvamśa*, i, 75.

In another Kuṇinda coin (Fig. 65), on the obverse, where the cow is represented, there is a mountain with *chhatra* on top in front of the animal, the *kalpavṛiksha* within a railing behind her, a zigzag below her, and *Śrīvatsa* mark above her, just between the horns. On either side of the *Śrīvatsa* there are two objects, one probably a symbol of Sūrya almost like a lotus with rays arranged like petals all around and a *pūrṇakumbha*. The whole thing is to suggest several aspects of the cow. We have already noted that she rests under the shade of the *Kalpavṛiksha*. Kālidāsa also says that Kāmadhenu resides in Pātāla, the nether-world, which is guarded at the gate by snakes, in order to provide the *havis* or sacred ghee for the *yajña* of Varuṇa.

havishe dīghasatrasya sāchedānim
prachetasaḥ
bhujaṅgapihitadvāram pātālam adhitishṭhati
—*Raghuvamśa*, i, 80.

The zigzag below the cow only suggests Pātāla guarded by *bhujaṅgas* or snakes. The mountain with *chhatra* on it is only the expanse of the earth and the *chhatra* on it shows the single parasol or umbrella of the emperor who protected the earth that had assumed the form of a cow.

ekātapatrām bhuvam ekavīraḥ
purārgalādīrghabhujo bubhoja
—*Raghuvamsa*, xviii, 4.

jugopa gorūpadharām ivorvīm
—*Raghuvamsa*, ii, 3.

The *Śrīvatsa* above the horns has already been explained. The symbol of the Sun is to suggest that the cow is a daughter of the Sun, a Vedic concept that has survived through the centuries and is prominently mentioned in Gupta and early mediaeval inscriptions.

agner apatyam prathamam suvarṇam bhūr
vaishṇavī sūryasutāścha gāvaḥ
dattās trayas tena bhavanti lokāḥ yaḥ
kāñchanam gām cha mahīm cha dadyāt
—*Corp. Inscr.Ind.*, iii, p. 194.

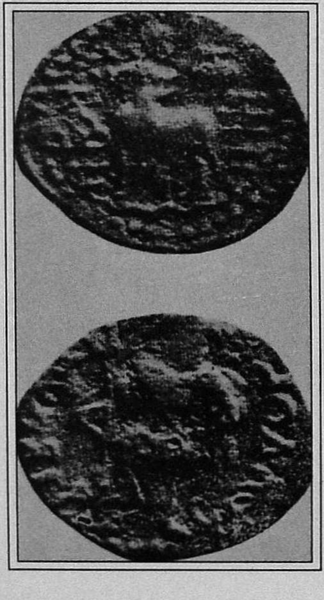


Fig. 65. Copper coin, anonymous, Kuṇinda, Tribal coin, 1st century B.C., reverse showing cow to left, Śrīvatsa symbol above horns, mountain surmounted by umbrella in front and Kalpa tree behind, wavy line below, purṇakalaśa, and lotus—like symbol on outer side of Śrīvatsa, Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Ancient Ind., pl. XXIII, 16.

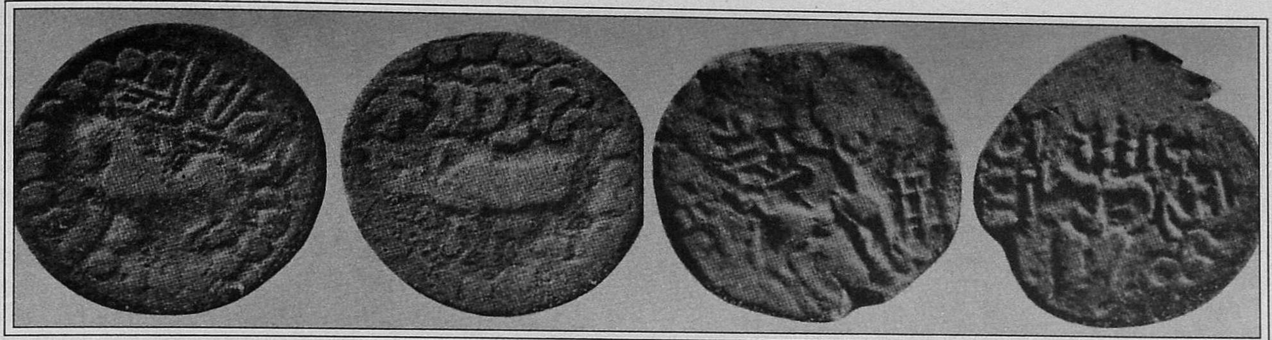


Fig. 66. Copper coin of Amśuvarman, Nepal, 7th century A.D., reverse showing cow standing left, above Kāmadehi, Coins Ancient Ind. Pl. XIII—4.

Fig. 67. Copper Coin, Yaudheya, Tribal coin, 2nd century A.D., obverse showing Kārtikeya six-headed, standing, holding spear in right hand and resting left hand on hip, legend in Brāhmī Bhagavatasvāmino brahmanyedevasya Kumārasya, reverse showing cow to right in front of shed, mountain surrounded by umbrella to left, pūrṇakalaśa above and legend in Brāhmī dharma above, Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Ancient Ind. Plate XL, 12.

The *pūrṇakumbha* suggests *amṛita* or ambrosia, the elixir of life, of which the divine cow is the source, and the *kumbha* itself also suggests her as *kuṇḍodhnī* with udder large like a pot. Just as in the verse in *sandhyā*

ābrahmabhuvanāllokād ā lokālokaparvatāt
ye vasanti dvijā devās tebhyo nityam namonamaḥ
chatussāgaraparyantam gobrāhmaṇebhyaś śubham bhavatu

so also here the entire expanse of the three worlds is taken into account, and Surabhi or the divine cow as the source of milk, the universal sustainer of life, is presented symbolically as an object of worship everywhere.

It has already been pointed out that the cow was not a mere animal for the supply of milk, and that she was venerated as the very embodiment of Kāmaduhā, i.e. yielding everything desired, a thought that pervaded the atmosphere in India when Kālidāsa lived and wrote, which accounts for his line

na kevalānām payasām prasūtim
avehi mām kāmadughām prasannām
—Raghuvamśa, ii, 63.

An early coin from Nepal belonging to Amśuvarman visually presents this line of Kālidāsa by giving on its obverse not only a picture of the cow standing but also the legend *kāmadehi,* the fulfiller of all desires (Fig. 66).

In early coins from Mathurā, as also in Yaudheya coins, the cow is prominently portrayed. In one variety of the Yaudheya coin, where Kārttikeya is shown with six heads holding a spear in his right hand with the left on his hip and where the legend reads *bhagavatas svāmino brahmaṇyadevasya kumārasya—Cat. Ind. Coins. British Mus. Ancient India.* p. cl and 270, the reverse shows the cow with all the symbols like the *Kalpataru, Meru, Śrīvatsa, Pūrṇakumbha,* etc. (Fig. 67). The word *Dharma,* inscribed above the animal, is also very significant, as in this context we have only to recall Udayana's remarks about *Dharma* as *chatushpād* or four-footed, and how in Kalī or the black age, *Dharma* totters on a single afflicted leg. Even here *Dharma* is usually to be conceived of in the form of a cow and it is this *rakshā* or protection for *Dharma* that is most desired by and satisfied *Brahmaṇyadeva.* This also accounts for such utterences as *abrahmaṇyam* for anything done which is sinful and which is to be avoided. It may here be remarked that the term Subrahmaṇya occurring in South India, for connoting Kārttikeya, is to emphasise the opposite of *abhrahmaṇya* which

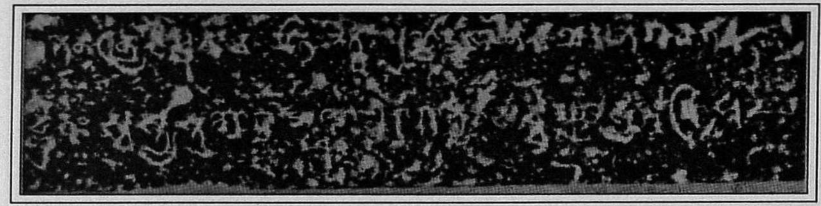


Fig. 68. Lines from the Eran pillar inscription of Mātṛivishṇu and Dhānyavishṇu, Gupta, 5th century A.D. Corp. inscr. Ind. III., p. 89.,

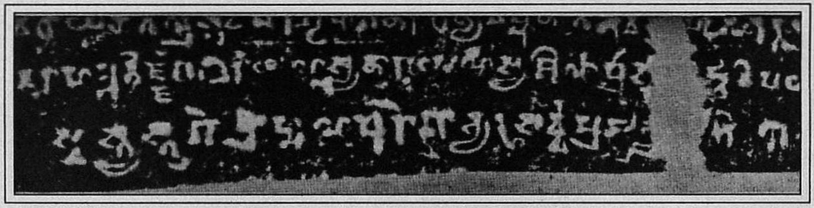


Fig. 69. Lines from the Eran Varāha image, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Corp. Inscr. Ind. III, p. 160.

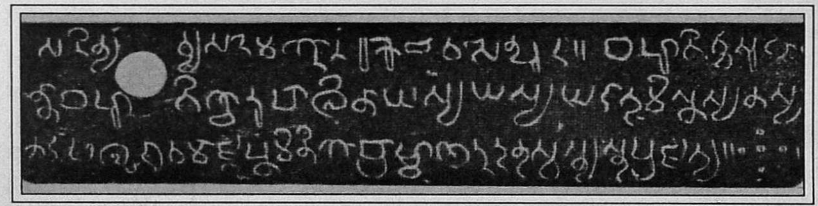


Fig. 70. Lines from the Chendalūr plates of the Pallava king Kumāravishṇu, Pallava, 5th century A.D., Epigraph, Ind. VIII, p. 235.

Fig. 71. Lines from the Nilāmbūr plates of the Kadamba king Ravivarma, Kadamba, 5th century A.D., Epigraph. Ind. VIII, p. 148.

is so pleasing to Kumāra. The cow being conceived as the very embodiment of *Dharma*, *gorakshā* was considered *dharmarakshā*, and that in an age when the motto was *dharmo rakshati rakshitaḥ*, which forms a legend on an early seal from Bhīṭā.

The association of *Brahmaṇyadeva* and the cow on a single coin on the obverse and the reverse is very significant when we find that in ancient India, when peace and prosperity were prayed for, the prayer always placed the cows and the adorers of *Brahmaṇyadeva* first. In the *maṅgala śantipāṭha*, after the reading of any chapter of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the opening verse is

svasti prajābhyaḥ paripālayantām
nyāyyena mārgeṇa mahīm mahīśāḥ
gobrāhmaṇebhyaś śubham astu
nityam lokās samastās sukhino
bhavantu.

During the performance of *sandhyā* the verse

chatussāgaraparyantam
gobrāhmaṇebhyaś śubham bhavatu

is uttered. This tradition is most ancient. In an inscription of the time of the Gupta emperor, Budhagupta, from a stone pillar at Eraṇ, recording the erection of *a dhvajastambha* for Vishṇu by a Mahārāja named Matṛivishṇu and his younger brother Dhānyavishṇu

chatūssamudraparyantaprath-
itayaśasā akshīṇamānadhanenāne-
kaśatrusamarajishṇunā mahārāja
mātṛivishṇunā tasyaivānujena
tadanuvidhāyinā tatprasādaparig-
ṛihītena dhānyavishṇunā cha
mātāpitṛoḥ puṇyāpyāyanārtham
esha bhagavataḥ
puṇyajanārdanasya janārdanasya
dhvajastambhobhyuchchṛitaḥ
svastyastu
gobrāhmaṇapurogābhyaḥ
sarvaprajābhyaḥ
—*Corp. Inscr. Ind.*, iii, p. 89.

The last line (Fig. 68) is 'Let prosperity attend all the subjects headed by the cows and the brāhmaṇas.' Another inscription, also from Eraṇ, on the chest of the colossal figure of Vishṇu

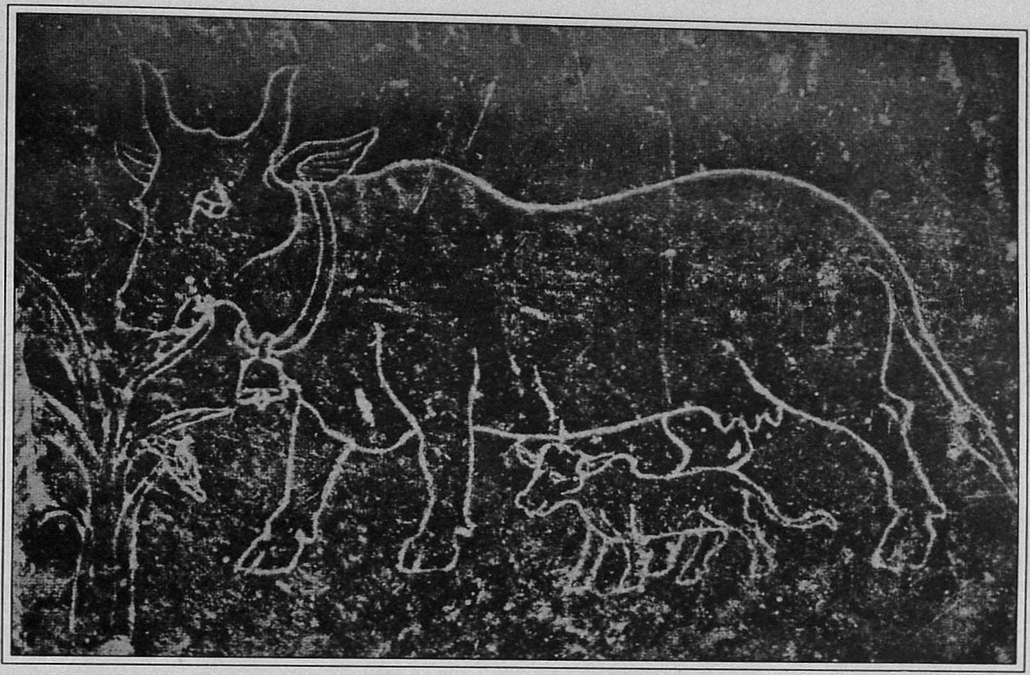


Fig. 72. Cow and calf from the Bodhgayā inscription of Mahānāman, Gupta, 6th century A.D., Corp. Inscr, Ind. III, p. 274.

as a boar, dated in the reign of Toramāna, and recording the building of the temple for Varāha by Dhānyavishṇu, younger brother of Mahārāja Mātṛivishṇu, has also the same tenor for its last line (Fig. 69).

mahārājamātṛivishṇos svarggatasya
bhrātrānujena tadanuvidhāyinā
tatprasādaparigrihītena dhānyavishṇunā
tenaiva sahāvibhaktapuṇyakṛiyeṇa
mātāpitroḥ puṇyāpyāyaṇārtham asya
bhagavato varāhamūrter jagatparāyaṇasya
nārāyaṇasya śilāprāsādaḥ svavishayesmin
airikine kāritaḥ, svastyastu
gobrāhmaṇapurogābhyaḥ sarvaprajābhyaḥ

—*Corp. Inscr. Ind.*, iii, p. 160.

The last line of the Chendalūr plates of the Pallava king Kumāravishṇu (Fig. 70) is to the same effect

gobrāhmaṇam nandatu
svastyastu prjābhyaḥ

—*Epigraph. Ind.*, viii, 235.

In another early inscription from South India, the Nilambūr plates of the Kadamba king Ravivarman, the benediction for *gobrāhmaṇa* is prominent (Fig. 71)

svastyastu gobrāhmaṇebhyaḥ prajābhyo
maṅgalam

—*Epigraph. Ind.*, viii, p. 148.

The idea behind this invocation, suggesting the intense love, affection and reverence for the cow, breathes the atmosphere of the time which was fully charged with the thought revealed in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*. In the Vishṇusahasranāma, the Lord is named Gohita, Gopati and Goptā. In the same Anuśāsanaparva, where occurs the Vishṇusahasranāma, there is a story which clearly shows the high pedestal on which the cow was placed in ancient India. The sage Chyavana was performing severe penance in midstream under the waters of the river at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā. Around him frolicked innumerable fishes, amidst which he

Fig. 73. Kṛishṇa lifting Govardhana, Western Chāḷukya, 6th century A.D., Bādāmī, Western India.

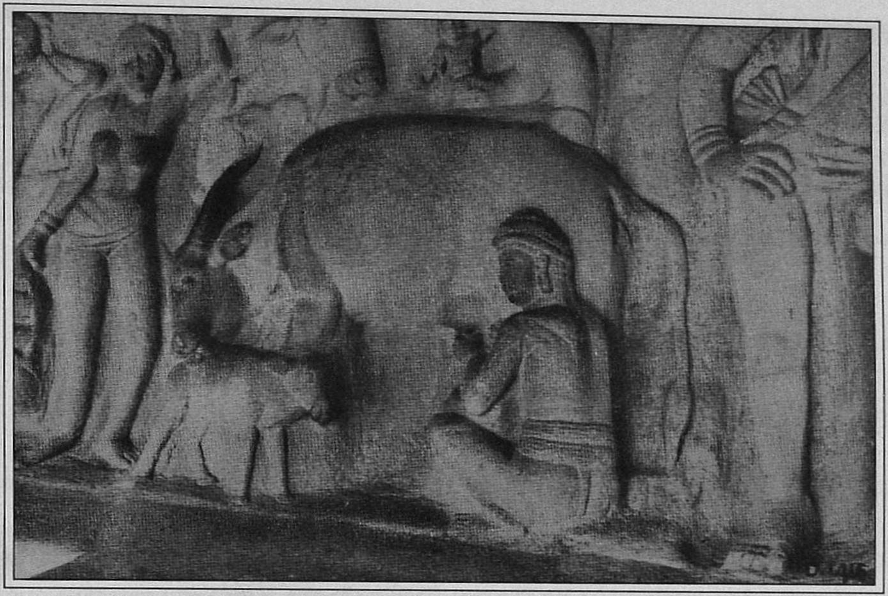


Fig. 74. Milking scene from the Govardhana cave, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahābalipuram, South India.

stayed. The fishermen cast their net and had a rich and heavy haul. What was their surprise when they found the sage Chyavana in their haul of fishes! They were greatly perturbed, but the sage reassured them and not only excused them for what they thought was a great offence of theirs but also asked them to go and request the king of the realm, Nahusha, to give them his cost, as, being caught along with the fishes he was entitled to equal treatment with the fishes and was expected to fetch a price for the fishermen. The king hurried to the spot and offered first a thousand, then ten thousand, a million, a half of his kingdom and finally in despair even his entire realm; but still the sage Chyavana shook his head and said it was not his price. The king was at his wit's end, when a wise sage counselled him to offer a cow as the value of the sage. The king gladly offered a cow and Chyavana nodded his head in approval as that was his correct value, a cow more than a kingdom!

brahmaṇānām gavām chaiva
kulam ekam dvidhā kṛitam
ekatra mantrās tishṭhanti
havir anyatra tishṭhati
anargheyā mahārāja
dvijā varṇeshu chottamāḥ
gāvascha purushavyāghra
gaur mūlyam parikalpyatām

—*Mahābhārata*, xiii, i, 8b, 23–24 (S. edn.).

The sage Chyavana, a repository of the *Vedas* and a cow, a repository of *havis,* the material for yāga, were equated.

The climax of this concept is reached in the context of the story of how Pārvatī redeemed her husband Śiva, whom she had offered as *dakshiṇā* fee of a *vrata,* by offering cows, as directed by Vishṇu, who equated his body equally with the cows and Śiva.

vishṇudehā yathā gāvo vishṇudehas tathā
śivaḥ
dvijāya dattvā gomūlyam gṛihāṇa
svāminam śubhe

—*Prahmavaivartapurāṇa, iii, 7, 80.*

The significance of this concept is fully presented by the stress laid on the *mahāmantra*

Fig. 75. Choḷa memorial for the cow that asked for justice of Manunītikaṇḍachoḷa, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Tiruvārūr, South India.

namo brahmaṇyadevāya
gobrāhmaṇahitāya cha
jagaddhitāya kṛishṇāya govindāya
namonamaḥ
—*Mahābhārata,* xii, 1, 46, 126 (S.edn.).

as purificatory utterance for washing away several heinous sins, as suggested by Bhīshma in the Śāntiparva of the *Mahābhārata.*

On the tablet containing the Bodhgayā inscription of Mahānāman (Fig. 72), mentioning the erection of a temple for Buddha, towards the end of the text, there is a fine representation of a cow and calf nibbling the leaves of a plantain tree close by (*Corp. Insc. Ind., III,* p. 274). This is as much as to indicate by means of a picture what is sought to be conveyed by so many words in other inscriptions as in examples just discussed. The idea is only that everyone, beginning with the cows, should be happy in the country.

In some of the *Bharatavākyas* in dramas as in the *Mṛichchhakaṭika*

Kshīriṇyas santu gāvo bhavatu vasumatī
sarvasampannasasyā
parjanyaḥ kālavarshī
sakalajanamanonadino vāntu vātāḥ
modantām janmabhājas satatam abhimatā
brāhmaṇās santu santaḥ
śrīmantaḥ pāntu pṛithvīm praśamitaripavo
dharmanishṭhāś cha bhūpāḥ
—*Mṛichchhakaṭika,* x, 60.

the prayer for the welfare of the cows, as a perennial source of good rich milk, is prominent along with that for the prosperity of one and all in the country. The idea is preserved even in inscriptions, as, for instance, in a verse from the Vandram copper plates of the Eastern Chāḷukya king Ammarāja II presenting a prosperous picture of the land

yasmin śāsati nṛipatau
paripakkvānekasasyasampachchhāliḥ
satatapayodhenur abhīr nirītir aparug
nirastachoro deśaḥ
—*Epigraph Ind.,* Ix, p. 131.

Rich crops, cows yeilding a surfeit of milk, luscious fruits and vegetables, honey and candy galore, this meant the prosperity of the people and this is what we find prayed for even in the *Vedas.* Of desirable things suggested in Vedic benediction it is, among others, a cow assuring plenty of milk.

ābrahman brāhmaṇo brahmavarchasī
jāyatām āsmin rāshṭre rājanya ishavyaś
śūro mahāratho jāyatām dogdhrī
dhenur voḍhānaḍvān āśus saptiḥ purandhir
yoshā jishṇū ratheshṭhas sabheyo yuvāsya
yajamānasya vīro jāyatām nikāme nikāme
naḥ parjanyo varshatu phalinyo na
oshadhayaḥ pachyantām yogakshemo naḥ
kalpatām.

This is the prayer. In another again the cows are desired to be rendered sweet like honey, meaning thereby that the milk they give should be as sweet. This idea of the sweetness of honey has been very prominent in the minds of the Vedic seers who have required the whole atmosphere to be charged with honey as it were

madhu vātā ṛitāyate, madhu ksharanti
sindhavaḥ,
mādhvīr nas santvoshadhīḥ, madhu naktam
utoshasi
madhumat pārthivam rajaḥ, madhu dyaur
astu naḥ pitā,
madhumān no vanaspatir madhumān astu
sūryaḥ, mādhvīr gāvo bhavantu naḥ.

Let the cows be honey-sweet is the burden of the song in Vedic India. And it has remained the same during the centuries thereafter.

One of the most important scenes from the life of Kṛishṇa, so often depicted in Gutpa sculpture, is the lifting of the Govardhana mountain. This scene occurs in several places (Fig. 73), the earliest being from a pillar in Māṇḍor in Rajasthan. It represents the mountain lifted up and the cows nestling underneath for protection from the rain

vrishṭivyākulagokulāvanarasād uddhṛitya
govardhanam
bibhradvallavavallavābhiradhikāna-
mdāchchiram chumbitaḥ
darpeṇaiva
tadarpitādharataṭīsindūramudrānkito
bāhur gopatanos tanotu bhavatām śreyāmsi
kamsadvishaḥ

— *Gītagovinda,* iv, 9.

as Jayadeva puts it.

The story is graphically given in the *Vishṇupurāṇa* relating how Indra was furious with the cowherds who failed to offer him timely worship and caused an unprecedented downpour from which Kṛishṇa saved them by lifting up the mountain Govardhana and holding it up on his little finger for seven days till the fury of the storm abated. As Kālidāsa says

barheṇeva sphuritaruchinā gopaveshasya
vishṇoḥ

—*Meghadūta,* i, 15.

Kṛishṇa was only a sportive form of Vishṇu—*līlāmanushavigraha* and, though a child, could yet hold up the mountain.

bālopi śailoddharaṇāgrapāṇir nīlopi
nirandhratamaḥ pradīpaḥ
dhīropi rādhānayanāvabaddho jāropi
samsāraharaḥ kutas tvam

—*Kṛishṇakarṇāmṛitam,* ii, 72.

A graphic picture of the Govardhana scene, probably the most impressive in Indian sculpture, comes from Mahābalipuram. In the Govardhana cave a fine picture of the cowherds and milkmaids, with their wealth of cattle, is presented. Delightful detail is the cowherd milking a fine cow which fondly licks her calf (Fig. 74), recalling the literary picture of a similar situation described by Mayūra

āhatyāhatya mūrdhnā drutamanupibataḥ
prasnutam māturūdhaḥ
kiñchitkuñchaikajānor
anavaratachalachchārupuchchhasya dhenoḥ
uttīrṇam tarṇakasya priyatanayatayā
dattahunkāramudrā
visramsikshīradhārālavaśabalamukhas-
yāngam ātṛipti leḍhi.

A lovely cowherd's wife stands with a sling containing pots of milk and curd, piled one over the other, and a bundle of fodder on her head, her husband standing at ease to her right with an axe idly resting on his shoulder. Beyond the cow, higher up, there is a whole herd of cows and calves and amidst them a young woman with a child listens to the sweet strains of music from a flute played by a cowherd. Another young woman is shown approaching holding her little boy, while her youngest child is comfortably daydreaming on the shoulder of his old

grandfather, who follows his daughter. Amidst all these cowherds and their retinue there are two prominent figures easily distinguished by their imposing personality, Balarāma and Kṛishṇa, the latter with his hand raised to hold up the mountain. The sculptor has taken great pains to present the scene, as ably as he can. But Kṛishṇa, here is shown in human aspect. In the same scene, which also occurs at Ellora, Kṛishṇa, lifting Govardhana, has an additional pair of arms, to suggest that it is the Lord himself who raised the hill. The popularity of this scene all over the land, when the whole atmosphere was charged with the utmost respect and affection for the cow, is not at all difficult to understand. It serves to remind every one of their duty to the cow, for whose protection the Lord himself lifted up such a huge mountain as Govardhana. In the face of this great task, performed, by the Lord, how small indeed is what is expected of us, the mere sincere care of the most useful animal which sustains us all from childhood onwards.

One of the most popular legends, very often depicted in sculpture and painting in South Indian temples, is the story of the great Choḷa king Manunītikaṇḍa, who did justice to one and all and never failed in this duty. One day, it so happened that the prince, his only son, was proceeding in his chariot, an unavoidable accident occurred, and a calf was run over by his car and killed. The cow, in great grief, pulled the rope and rang the bell in the palace demanding justice. When the king enquired and learnt the reason for it, he insisted on justice being done, and himself rode his car to crush his son under its wheels, as no minister or any of his subjects would agree to obey the king in this one act of putting an end to the life of their beloved crown prince. A memorial for the cow is an important Choḷa monument representing the animal that prayed for justice and had it enshrined in a miniature *maṇḍapa* in Tiruvārūr (Fig. 75).

The picture of the cow that is presented in literature is a very rosy one; and when we remember that *godhana*, cattle wealth was a very important one, of which only the best examples were to be given away and a gift to the contrary was held up to ridicule, we can see why the young Nachiketas felt sorry that his father was offering useless old cows as gifts—*pitodakā jagdhatṛiṇā*. The ideal however has been to possess huge herds of cattle and we may recall the humorous incident from the *Rāmāyaṇa* where Rāma offers as many cows as would cover the space up to the line touched by a rod thrown by the old Bṛahmin who came to request the prince to present him with some gift. This only shows what a wealth of cows was maintained. Again when Janaka offers suitable reward for the best answers for his philosophic queries, Yājñavalkya comes forward to claim this noble fee composed of fine cows well decorated with gold. The very name of the mountain Govardhana, suggests the ideal and desire in ancient India for increasing and multiplying the great wealth of cattle, strong, healthy and fine looking, rich in their yield of milk, the ambrosia on earth.

The concern for the cow in ancient India is easily seen by the influence the word for cow has on the vocabulary in Sanskrit. The term *'go'* precedes or follows several other words which compose words of special significance. Sometimes the very idea of the cow may not be recognized in the latter form of the word itself, but that does not preclude the fact that originally it was something pertaining to the animal that was responsible for the creation of the word.

The Sanskrit language is so rich and so full of words to convey subtle shades of meaning that is amazing to find what a wealth of vocabulary we have in that language for connoting everything connected with the cow.

Now, to take examples, we know that in architecture there are different words like *gopura, gomukha, gavāksha, gopānasī, goshṭha,* all connoting different parts of a structure.

Suggestive of time we have special terms as *gosarga* or *govisarga* and *godhūli* or *gopraveśa* connoting respectively daybreak and dusk, one suggesting the time when cows are let out from their sheds for grazing and the other when they return in the evening raising a lot of dust behind

them as they come back home. *Godohana*, the time taken for milking, which does not exceed a few minutes, is the time prescribed for a mendicant to stand silently at the door of a house for the sake of *bhikshā*.

Measurement of distance is also on the basis of the term *'go'* as there are such words as *gavyūti* or *goruta* meaning two *krośas*.

Even terms to connote officials under the king have often been based on the term *'go'* as, for instance, *gopa* and *govallava*.

Certain spots in a stream which may be fordable are described by terms like *gopratara*, as what is good enough for a cow is good enough for the rest and it is safe to cross the stream at a *gopratara*. On the same analogy the term *goshṭhī* connotes an assembly of good men discussing pleasant subjects (based on a *goshṭha* full of cows so pleasant to be loved).

Now to take the actual vocabulary indicating the cow, different aspects of the animal are conveyed by terms which are singularly suggestive; for instance we have a cow one year old *ekahāyanī*, two years old *dvihāyanī*, three years old *trihāyanī* and four years old *chuturhāyanī* according to the age.

According to the colour of the cow also the name varies. We have a mottled or brindled cow styled *śambhalī*, a white one *dhavalā*, a dark *kapilā* and so forth.

A cow in heat, just mated with a bull, is known as *sandhinī*, and when she miscarries by accident she is *vaśā* or *vandhyā*. A cow that miscarries by mating unseasonably is *vehat*. When ready for the bull she is *upasaryā*. A very young cow that has borne many calves is called *pareshṭukā* or *bahūsuṭikā*. When she has newly calved she is *navasūtikā* or *dhenu*. When a cow gives birth to a calf at long intervals she is known as *bashkayiṇī* or *chirasūtā*, but when she calves every year she is *samāmṣamīnā*. According to the magnitude of the udder of the cow, which assures a huge yield of milk, she is known as *pīnodhnī* or *kuṇḍodhnī*. When she yields a *droṇa* measure of milk or quite a large amount she *is* *droṇakshīrā* or *droṇadugdhā*. A nice quiet cow is *achaṇḍī* and *sukarā*, and one easily managed while milking is *suvratā* or *sukhasandohyā*; when she loves to stand at her place in a dairy for milking she is *dhenushyā*. Even according to the beauty of the cow varying with the shape of her horns, she is known by appropriate terms like *śṛiṅgiṇī* and so forth.

The rich vocabulary fully points to the deep attention devoted to the tending of cattle and increasing their population for the general welfare of the community.

When we turn to the *Arthaśāstra* it becomes very clear how anxious they were in ancient India to protect and increase the treasure of cattle in the land. The rules that the king had to enforce for the care of the cow as given by Kauṭilya are indeed revealing. Cowherds were maintained by payment of wages, as it was felt that if they were to graze the herds for the profit of milk or milk products, the calves would be starved by them to death, and so this was avoided.

> *gopālakapiṇḍārakadohakamanthakalubdhakāś*
> *śatam śatam dhenūnām hiraṇyabhṛitāḥ*
> *pālayeyuḥ; kshīraghṛitabhṛitā hi vatśān*
> *upahanyur iti vetanopagrāhikam*
>
> —*Arthaśāstra*, ii, 29.

This was one of the systems of maintaining a cowherd and probably the best. Aged and crippled cows and those not easily milked were also looked after though termed 'useless and abandoned'. Cowherds were expected to apply remedies to calves, aged cows and ailing ones.

> *jaradgudhenugarbhiṇīpashṭhauhīvatsatarīṇām*
> *samavibhāgam rūpaśatam ekaḥ pālayet;*
> *vyādhitānyangānanyadohīdurdohāputraghnīnām*
> *cha samavibhāgam rūpaśatam pālayantas*
> *tajjātikam bhāgam dadyuriti*
> *bhagnotsṛishṭakam,*
> *bālavṛiddhavyādhitānām gopālakāḥ*
> *pratikuryuḥ*
>
> —*Arthaśāstra*, ii 29.

It is these that are generally neglected and this care for them was specially emphasised. Even the food to be given to the cattle is

mentioned, and the weight and quantity is specially marked, care being taken to note the condition of the cow or bull, the work extracted from the latter and the milk obtained from the former. Cowherds were to take great care that the cattle entered only such streams and ponds, as were of equal depth all over, and free from mire and crocodiles, and they were to be alert to protect them from dangers.

balīvardānām nasyāśvabhadragativāhinām
yavasasyārdhabhāraḥ triṇasya dviguṇam
tulā ghāṇapiṇyākasya daśāḍhakam
kaṇakuṇḍakasya pañchapalikam
mukhalavaṇam tailakuḍuvo nasyam
prasthaḥ pānam,
māmsatulādadhṇaschādhakam
yavadroṇam māshāṇām vā pulākaḥ
kshīradroṇam ardhāḍhakam vā surāyāḥ
snehaprasthaḥ kshāradaśapalam
śriṅgiberapalam cha pratipānam,
pādonamaśvataragokharāṇām dviguṇam
mahishoshṭrāṇām
karmakarabalīvardānām, pāyanārtham cha
dhenūnām karmakālataḥ phalataś cha
vidhānām, sarveshām cha
triṇodakaprākāmyam, samavyūḍhatīrtham
akardamagrāham udakam avatārayeyuḥ
pālayeyuś cha

—*Arthaśāstra*, ii, 29.

Cattle were to be taken only to such forests for grazing, with pasture growth seasonally allotted, as were rendered free from thieves, tigers and other wild animals, by hunters, with the aid of hounds; and even there a precaution was taken, that of tying bells to the animals, the jingling sound of which scared away reptiles and tigers and also aided the cowherd to know the whereabouts of the herd.

lubdhakaśvagaṇibhir
apāstastenavyālaparabādhabhayam
ritubibhaktam araṇyam chārayeyuḥ,
sarpavyālatrāsanārtham
gocharānupātajñānārtham cha trasnūnām
ghaṇṭātūryam cha badhnīyuḥ

—*Arthaśāstra*, ii, 29.

When we see the injunctions regarding the milking of the cows, we see how sympathetic, they have been in ancient India towards both the cow and the calf. During the rainy season, autumn and early winter, the cow could be milked in the morning and evening, but in the later part of winter, spring and summer she should be milked only once in the morning and the punishment for milking a second time during the forbidden period was very severe indeed.

varshāśaraddhemantān ubhayataḥ kālam
duhyuḥ, śiśiravasantagrīshmān ekakālam,
dvitīyakāladogdhur angushṭhachchhedo
daṇḍaḥ, dohakālamatikrāmatas
tatphalahānam daṇḍaḥ

—*Arthaśātra*, ii, 29.

When we take the Dharmaśāstra we find that the lawgivers have gone a step further and the *Manusmriti* lays down that one who noticed a calf feeding on its mother's milk, whether it was his or another's, should not take cognizance of it.

na vārayed gām dhayantīm na chāçhakshīta
kasyachit

— *Manusmriti*, iv, 59.

It was surely felt that the calf had a greater right to its mother's milk than the human being who appropriates to himself rather unreasonably something that by natural right belongs to the animal.

The great anxiety about the sustenance of the calf shows how deeply people in ancient India were interested in promoting the growth of the calf, because the calf was the future cow or bull.

Injunctions are very clear that one should always go by circumambulating in the *pradakshiṇa* fashion by keeping to the right of the animal.

mridam gām daivatam vipram ghritam
madhu catushpatham
pradakshiṇāni kurvīta prajñātāmścha
vanaspatīn

—*Manusmriti* , ii, 89.

The cowshed was equally a holy place. The *goshṭha* was a place where expiation of great sins was possible by visiting it.

japitvā trīṇi sāvitryās sahasraṃ
sasamāhitaḥ
māsam goshṭhe payaḥ pītvā
muchyateṣatparigrahāt

—*Manusmriti*, xi, 194.

The *goshṭha,* like any other of the important holy sites, was specially to be noted and defiling it was to be avoided.

> *na mūtram pathi kurvīta na bhasmani na govraje*
>
> —*Manusmṛiti,* iv, 45.

It was a *tīrtha.* One of the expiatory rites was the feeding of the cow with grass.

> *satyam uktvā tu vipreshu vikired yavasam gavām*
> *gobhiḥ pravartite tīrthe kuryus tasya parigraham*
>
> — *Manusmṛiti,* xi. 196.

It is a symbol of attention to the cow which could be efficacious in removing great sins. From the Vedic period the cow was conceived as the abode of all the Devas (Fig. 63) and there are hymns in the *Ṛigveda* and *Atharvaveda* to substantiate this idea which is later also incorporated in the *Purāṇas* and the epics. In the Āśramavāsikaparva, Kṛishṇa so describes the cow and enumerates the celestials associated with each of her limbs (*Mahābhārata,* xiv, 92).

The very touch of the cow was supposed to be holy.

> *sachelo bahir āplutya gām ālabhya viśudhyati*
>
> —*Manusmṛiti,* xi, 202.

Anything connected with it was equally so. It is on this account that anything emanating from the cow was taken as sacred and the *pañchagavya* composed of the five elements from the cow—milk, curd, clarified butter and even the dung and urine of the cow were included as an antidote against all pollution.

> *gomūtram gomayam kshīram dadhi sarpiḥ kuśodakam*
> *ekarātropavāsas cha kṛichchhram sāntapanam smṛitam*
>
> —*Manusmṛiti,* xi, 212.

According to the story in the *Raghuvamśa,* Raghu, who was amazed to find the sacrificial horse missing, and could not see who had carried it away, found it possible to locate the thief in the person of Indra only by the touch of the urine of the cow Nandinī that accidentally arrived on the spot.

> *tadaṅganishyandajalena lochane pramṛijya*
> *puṇyena puṛaskritas satām*
> *atīndriyeshvapyupapannadarśano babhūva*
> *bhāveshu dilīpanandanaḥ*
>
> —*Raghuvamśa, iii, 41.*

In the inscriptions of Govindachandradeva, the great king of Kanauj, the line pertaining to the process of his gift runs

> *gokarṇakuśalatāpūtakaratalodakapūrvam*
> *āchandrārkam yāvat śāsanīkṛitya pradattaḥ*
>
> —*Epigraph, Ind., xiii, p. 297.*

It is given for all time, as long as the moon lasts, by recording it on a copper plate, after pouring water with his hand, purified by the touch of *kuśa* blades and the ear of the cow. The king, even after his bath in the Ganges, even after worshipping the moon-crested Śiva and Vāsudeva, the protector of the universe, and reverencing the hot-rayed sun, and performing *homa* with *havis,* considered himself pure for making the *dāna* only by the touch of *kuśa,* and more than that of *gokarṇa,* the ear of the cow.

The touch of the innocent cow or the deer has been greatly welcomed by ancient Ṛishis and some of them were even happy to have their progeny decorated with something associated with the cow. Thus we have Ṛishyaśṛiṅga with a horn of the deer in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Gokarṇa* in the *Bhāgavata.* It is noteworthy that there is an early representation of Ṛishyaśṛiṅga and may be Gokarṇa also; it is interesting that *kṛishṇājina* was worn by Ṛishis very proudly, associating themselves with the innocent deer; and for purposes of *japa* even today the custom of holding the hand in what is known as *gomukhī* made of cloth shaped like the face of a cow, and bathing household deities with water from vessels having *gomukha* spouts has survived in *pūjā.*

The cow preceded as an auspicious object in all ceremonies like marriage and there was what was known as the *godāna.*

prabhāte kalyām utthaya chakre godānam uttamam
gavām śatasahasrāṇi brāhmaṇebhyo narādhipaḥ
ekaikaśo dadau rājā putrān uddiśya dharmataḥ
suvarṇaśṛiṅgās sampannās savatsāḥ kāmsyadohanāḥ
gavām śatasahasrāṇi chatvāri purusharshabhaḥ
—*Rāmāyaṇa*, i, 72, 21—23.

The cow was the measure by which a gift was considered and we have the animal coming in for several gifts both in marriage and funeral ceremonies and on several occasions in the normal course of life.

To be born of a cow was considered so holy that there was such a system as *gogarbha*, which is mentioned in several inscriptions. Several Kshatriya kings tried to become holier by going through the mouth of a huge metallic representation of a cow and coming out by the other end.

If kind words and courtesy are the ideal of a nation, the object likened to that shows the highest value placed on it and the Ṛishis that have made sweet words and the simplest possible hospitality, the ideal duty of even the poorest

triṇāni bhūmir udakam vāk chaturthī cha sūnṛitā
etānyapi satām gehe nochchhidyante kadāchana

have reiterated this, through the words of later writers, who were their equals like Bhavabhūti in the line

kāmān dugdhe viprakarshatyalakshmīm
kīrtim sūte dushkṛitim yā hinasti
tām chāpyetām mātaram maṅgalānām
dhenum dhīrā sūnṛitām vācham āhuḥ
—*Uttararāmacharitam*, v.

This is equally an echo of Vedic thought, as in

vācam dhenum upāsīta, tasyā chatvāraḥ
stanāḥ svāhākāro vashaṭkāro hantakāras
svadhākāraḥ, tasyai dvau stanau devā
upajīvanti svāhākāram cha vashaṭkāram
cha, hantakāram manushyāḥ svadhākāram
pitaraḥ, tasyāḥ prāṇā ṛishabhaḥ mano
vatsaḥ
—*Bṛihadāraṇyakopanishad*, v, 8, 1.

and in

utsam duhanti kalaśam chaturbilam iḍām
devīm madhumatīm suvarvidam
tad indrāgnī jinvatam sūnṛitāvat tad
yajamānam amṛitatve dadhātu
—*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, iii, 7, 4.

This dumb animal, which has helped man more than any other of those domesticated, has probably the greatest claim for grateful acknowledgement, affection and reverence by humanity, and probably this has been adequately expressed in ancient India, and today, the least that can be done by us is as far as possible to follow up the spirit of this cow worship and care of cattle in ancient India.

॥ THE RULER ॥

The Indian concept of the ruler is very lofty. He is of the essence of the lord of protection, Vishṇu—*nāvishṇuḥ prithivīpatiḥ*. He is of the very nature of the guardians of the quarters

narapatikūlabhutyai garbham ādhatta rājñī
gurubhir abhinivishṭam lokapālanubhāvaiḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, ii, 75.

yamakuberajaleśvaravajriṇām samadhuram
—*Raghuvamśa*, ix,

pañchamam lokapālānām ūchus
sādharmyayogataḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, xvii, 78.

His responsibilities were indeed very great. He lived and ruled not for his own pleasure but for the welfare of his subjects. He was called *Rājā* as he made his people happy.

yathā prahlādanāchchandraḥ pratāpāt
tapano yathā
tathaiva so bhūd anvartho rājā
prakṛitirañjanāt
—*Raghuvamśa*, iv, 12.

tathā hi sarve tasyāsan parārthaikaphalā
guṇāḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, i, 29.

balam ārtabhayopaśāntaye vidushām
satkṛitaye bahuśrutam
vasu tasya vibhor na kevalam guṇavattā hi
paraprayojanā
—*Raghuvamśa*, viii, 31.

And naturally the people loved him wholeheartedly and considered his prosperity as their own.

tam āhitautsukyam adarśanena prajāḥ
prajārthavratakarśitāṅgam
netraiḥ papus triptim anāpnuvadbhir
navodayam nātham ivoshadhīnām
—*Raghuvamśa*, ii, 73.

The king strove for the prosperity of his kingdom as far as it lay in his power and even invoked divine help.

kim atra chitram yadi kāmāsūr bhūṛ vṛitte
sthitasyādhipateḥ prajānām
achintanīyas tu tava prabhāvo manīshitam
dyaur api yena dugdhā
—*Raghuvamśa*, v, 33.

To him there was no friend or foe as his eye of justice saw only in terms of righteousness.

dveshyopi summataś śishṭas tasyārtasya
yathaushadham
tyājyo dushṭaḥ priyopyāsīd
aṅgulīvoragakshatā
—*Raghuvamśa*, i, 28.

The king inflicted punishment wherever necessary only in the interest of discipline and justice, and married only for progeny to continue the line, and in his case prosperity or wealth and love were subordinated to *dharma* or righteousness, which was the sole guiding factor in these two phases as well.

sthityai daṇḍayato daṇḍyān pariṇetuḥ
prasūtaye
apyarthakāmau tasyāsṭām dharma eva
manīshiṇaḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, i, 29.

Old he was in wisdom, though young in years, with complete control over his senses, without in the least being distracted by pleasures, and with his mind centered on and acting according to the modes of righteousness in the fullness of his wisdom, born of his extensive knowledge.

Fig. 76. Gold coin of Chandragupta II, Gupta, 4th century A.D., obverse showing King standing left nimbate, casting incense in altar, a dwarf attendant holding umbrella over him, legend Kshitim avajitya sucharitair divam jayati Vikramādityaḥ, Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dynasty, VIII, 3.

anākṛishṭasya vishayair vidyānām pāradṛiśvanaḥ
tasya dharmarater āsīd vṛiddhatvam jarasā vinā

—*Raghuvamśa*, i, 23.

A great diplomat, the king's plans could be inferred only from the results and effects thereof, as his thought was as much a secret as his countenance was impenetrable.

Fig. 77. Gold coin of Chandragupta II, Gupta, 4th century A.D., obverse showing King shooting lion fallen on its back, legend Narendrachandraḥ prathita......divam jayatyajeyo bhuvi simhavikramaḥ, Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dynasty, Pl. IX,-9.

tasya samvṛitamantrasya
gūḍhākāreṅgitasya cha
phalānumeyāḥ prārambhās samskārāḥ
prāktanā iva

—*Raghuvamśa*, 1, 20.

In short all his noble qualities were for serving the needs of others,

tathā hi sarve tasyāsan parārthaikaphalā guṇāḥ

—*Raghuvamśa, i, 29.*

This is the magnificent picture of the ruler that we get as we peep into the pages of ancient literature. This literary description of the king has also been visually represented by the sculptor who has vied with the poet in presenting a portrait of the king. The coins of ancient India mostly contain these attributes of the king as interpreted by the sculptor. Figures and symbols have been appropriately chosen for clever suggestion of the meaning sought to be conveyed.

His personality: The personality of the king has been always stressed. He is majestic, inspiring awe and reverence in the minds of all that approach him. He is a towering figure, pre-eminent wherever he stands, easily distinguished from the rest by his imposing form.

sarvātiriktasāreṇa sarvatejobhibhāvinā
sthitas sarvonnatenorvīm krāntvā merur ivātmanā

—*Raghuvamśa, i, 14.*

Like the Sāl tree he is tall and imposing, his mighty arms long and valorous.

vyūḍhorasko vṛishaskandhas sālaprāmśur mahābhujaḥ
ātmakarmakshamam deham kshātro dharma ivāśṛitaḥ

—*Raghuvamśa, i, 13.*

The *chhatra* type of coin of Chandragupta (Fig. 76) indicates the personality of the king by representing him tall and majestic, with long and powerful arms, with which he won the suzerainty over earth and established his might. A single umbrella raised over him suggests this, and a dwarf, at his feet, holding the umbrella over his head, and almost groaning under the weight of it, is cleverly introduced to suggest by contrast that the king towers like a *sāl* tree and his arms lengthy, in accordance with the principle of *Mahāpurushalakshaṇa* (the

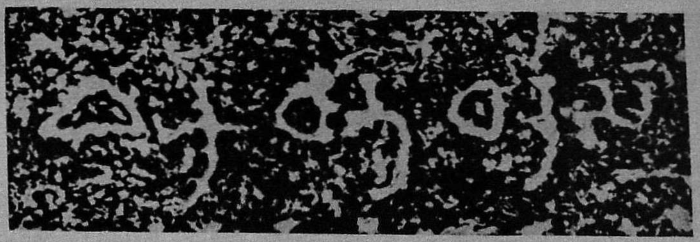


Fig. 78. *Fig. 79.* *Fig. 80.*

Fig. 78. Lead coin of Gautamīputra Viḷivāyāṅkura, Sātavāhana, 2nd century A.D.; bow strung and fitted with arrow pointing upwards, legend in Brāhmi, Rano Gautamīputasa Viḷivāyāṅkurasa; Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Andhra Dyn. W. Kshatra, Traikut, Bodhi Dynasty, P. III, 47.

Fig.79. Line from the Nāsik inscription of Vāsishṭhīputra Śrī Puḷumavi's grandmother Queen Gautamī Balasiri, Sātavāhana, 2nd century A.D., Epigraph Ind. VIII, p. 60, line 7.

Fig. 80. Gold coin of Samudragupta, Gupta, 4th century A.D.; obverse showing King nimbate standing wearing tight coat and ornament, holding bow in left hand and arrow in right hand, Garuḍa standard on left, legend beneath left arm Samudra and near margin around apratiratho vijitya kshitim sucharitair divam jayati; Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dynasty, Pl. IV. 1.

fortunate signs of superman). This is, as it were, a sculptural explanation of the description of Kālidāsa.

His valour : The valour of the king distinguishes him from the rest. His valour is comparable only to that of the king of the beasts, the lion. He is hence described as possessing the strength of a lion, *siṁhavikrama*. The tiger, the elephant, and the bull are also especially to be distinguished and the terms connoting these in Sanskrit are used as distinctive epithets for describing the best of every class. Thus the words *purushavyāghra*, *kapikuñjara*, *purusharshabha*. Kālidāsa describes a valiant king as *siṁhorusattva*, possessing the extraordinary strength of the lion.

Siṁhorusattvam nijagāda siṁhaḥ
—*Raghuvaṁśa*, ii, 33.

In the Gupta coinage there are issues known as the lion-slayer and the tiger-slayer types. The lion-slayer type shows the king with his bow drawn, standing in the *ālīḍha* or *pratyālīḍha* pose, the pose associated with a warrior in action, and attacking the lion, shown crouching on the ground in front of him, and the legend, in beautiful characters of the Gupta period, mentions the *biruda*, *siṁhavikrama* (Fig. 77). Similarly the prince is shown attacking a tiger and the legend here is *vyāghraparākrama.*

Great bowman : With this unique valour the king distinguished himself in the use of the bow and tried to be the best bowman of his time (Fig. 80). In describing the great king Dilīpa, Kālidāsa uses the word *ekadhanurdhara* the only bowman, the unrivalled archer in his verse

na kevalam tadgurur ekapārthivaḥ
kshitāvabhūd ekadhanurdharopi saḥ
—*Raghuvaṁśa*, iii, 31.

Exactly the same expression has been used in the famous inscription of Balasiri, the mother of Gautamīputra Śātakarṇī, in a cave for Buddhist monks at Nāsik, which she excavated, and where she recorded her donation (Fig. 79). The *praśasti* here is one of the noblest in Indian epigraphy. In a long, glowing description of the noble qualities of her son Gautamīputra, the sorrowing mother, Balasiri, during the reign of her grandson, Puḷūmāvi, uses the expression

ekakusasa ekadhanudharasa ekasūrasa
ekabamhaṇasa
—*Epigraph, Ind.*, viii, 60.

Fig. 81.

Fig. 82.

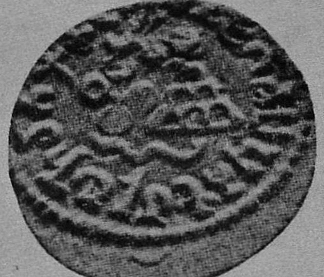


Fig. 83.

Fig. 81. Gold coin of Kumāragupta I, Gupta, 5th century A.D.; reverse showing Kārttikeya nimbate seated on peacock with spear in left hand (Śaktidhara) and sprinkling inçense on altar, legend, Mahendrakumāraḥ; Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dynasty, Pl. XV, 5.

Fig. 82. Silver coin of Gautamīputra Śrī Yajña Śātakarṇi, Sātavāhana, 2nd century A.D., obverse showing bust of King, legend in Brāhmī, Rano Gautamīputasa Siri Yana Satakanisa; Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Andhra Dynasty, W. Kshatra, Traikut, Bodhi Dynasty, Pl. VII, El.

Fig. 83. Silver coin of Gautamīputra Śrī Yajña Śri Śātakarṇi, Sātavāhana, 2nd century A.D., reverse showing mountain with crescent above, wavy band beneath, Ujjain symbol on left surmounted by crescent, rayed star between crescents, legend in Brāhmī... nasa Gautamīputasa Hiru Yana Hatakanisa; Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins, Andhra Dyn., W. Kshatra, Traikut, Bodhi Dyn., Pl. VII, El.

He had no rival bowman on earth. It is a remarkable thing that this expression is the same that Kālidāsa has used. It is still more interesting when we compare it with a coin of Gautamīputra Śātakarṇī himself, on the obverse of which is marked a large strung bow with the arrow fixed (Fig. 78). On the margin the legend gives the name of the king. The sense suggested by this bow is that there was only a single mighty bow, and the only bowman was Gautamīputra. It is a strung bow in action to which there was nothing in the world which was unobtainable.

na hishṭam asya tridivepi bhūpater abhūd
anāsādhyam adhijyadhanvanaḥ
—*Raghuvamśa,* iii, 6.

His valour comparable to Kumāra : Kumāra, the war-god, has been the ideal for every warrior; and as he is Devasenāpati, the commander-in-chief of the army of the gods, the ideal king strove to emulate Kumāra. In the so-called warrior type of Yaudheya coins, Kārttikeya is shown with his spear. This spirit is obvious in the lines of Kālidāsa where he compares several eminent princes of the line of Raghu to Kumāra himself.

brāhme muhūrte kila tasya devī
kumārakalpam sushuve kumāram
—*Raghuvamśa,* v, 36.

athopayantrā sadṛiśena yuktām skandena
sākshad iva devasenām
—*Raghuvamśa,* vii, I.

hareḥ kumāropi kumāravikramaḥ
—*Raghuvamśa,* iii, 55.

This last line of *Raghuvamśa* and the full sense of the comparison has been fully utilised for emphasising the valour of the Gupta emperor, who was not only a great devotee of Kumāra, but emulated the valour of this great commander of divine forces, and one of the coins of Kumāragupta, the peacock type, suggests this by showing the god on the peacock (Fig. 81).

Valorous though young : Not only was the king like Kumāra in prowess , but sometimes it so happened that the mighty king was still almost a boy, wearing his sidelocks, *kākapakshas,* as was the custom. But his valour was not counted in terms of his age and, though young, he inspired awe in the minds of his opponents, and well may Kālidāsa say

kauśikena sa kila kshitīśvaro rāmam
adhvaravighātaśāntaye
kākapakshadharam etya yāchitas tejasām
hi na vayas samīkshyate
—*Raghuvamśa*, xi, 1.

This is very vividly presented in a verse of Kālidāsa describing a young king who was yet a boy, but who, by his great personality and power, though yet wearing the juvenile side-locks, had his commands obeyed at the farthest ends of the shores of the ocean.

maṇau mahānīla iti prabhāvād
alpapramāṇopi yathā na mithyā
śabdo mahārāja iti pratītas tathaiva tasmin
yuyujerbhakepi
paryantasañchāritachāmarasya
kapolalolobhayakākapashāt
tasyānanād uchcharito vivādas chaskhāla
velāsvapi nārṇavānām
—*Raghuvamśa*, xviii, 92—93.

To understand this attribute of a youthful king, so distinguished in valour, we have only to see some of the coins of Gautamīputra Yajña Śātakaraṇī, on the obverse of which his portrait is given, a youthful head with side-locks, the special mode of hairdress for very young princes in ancient India (Fig. 82). The last of the great kings of the Sātavāhana line, he came to the throne young and ruled for a long time, and hence this stress on his youth on his coins.

His fame far reaching : On the reverse of this coin of Yajña Śātakarṇī there are four symbols which are very significant (Fig. 83). Together they connote a very noble meaning. Numismatists style these symbols a *chaitya* or hill surmounted by a crescent, Ujjain symbol with crescent on top, a zigzag and a star. But the real meaning of these symbols is curiously enough found explained in literature in a single significant verse of Kālidāsa describing the fame of Raghu, the great hero of his masterly production, *Raghuvamśa,* The verse is

ārūḍham adrīn udadhīn vitīrṇam
bhujaṅgamānām vasatim pravishṭam
ūrdhvam gatam yasya na chānubandhi
yaśaḥ parichchhettum iyattayālam
—*Raghuvamśa*, vi, 77.

In this verse Kālidāsa describes how the fame of Raghu climbed and travelled beyond the Lokāloka mountains, beyond the four oceans, went to the under-world, the abode of snakes, and to heaven above. As fame has always been regarded by Indian poets as white in colour and is compared to the moon, the crescent has been chosen for suggesting the fame of the king in these symbols, and the crescent on the top of the hill is appropriate. The crescent on top of the Ujjain symbol, which has four circular rings, suggests fame crossing the four oceans here represented as four *kaṭāhas*. The zigzag suggests the sinuous form of a snake intended to connote the nether-world, the abode of snakes, reached by fame. The star, or rather the cluster of stars, indicates the sky, and thus the travel of fame to heaven. This wonderful idea of the most coveted prize for a king, his fame, and the extent of its travel, so appealed to the Sātavāhana ruler Gautamīputra Śātakarṇī, that he introduced it on his coin and it was subsequently used by his descendant Gautamīputra Yajña Śātakarṇī as shown above. The idea so attracted subsequent sovereigns, even of different dynasties, that we find it repeated on the coins of Western Kshatrapas, like Rudradāman, Dāmasena, Vīradāman and others, with slight modifications.

His accomplishments : The king in ancient India was usually not only a great warrior and administrator but also a great connoisseur of art, and was himself accomplished in all the fine arts, like music, dance, sculpture and painting. We have the classical instance of Udayana of Kauśāmbī, the greatest player on the *vīṇā* during his time. Udayana's son Naravāhanadatta, could play wonderfully the *vīṇā* as his wife danced. Dushyanta could paint his beloved Śakuntalā to gaze at her beauty. Mahendravarman, the great Pallava king, was a distinguished musician, sculptor, engineer and architect, besides being a poet and dramatist. In the Allāhābād pillar inscription of Samudragupta there is a graphic account of his accomplishments, especially his skill on the *vīṇā* in which he excelled even divine minstrels like Tumburu and Nārada.

Fig. 84. Gold coin of Samudragupta, Gupta, 4th century A.D., obverse showing King nimbate wearing waist cloth and ornaments seated on high-backed couch, playing lyre resting on his lap, foot-stool beneath couch with letter Si, legend around Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Samudraguptaḥ; Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dyn., Pl. V, 1.

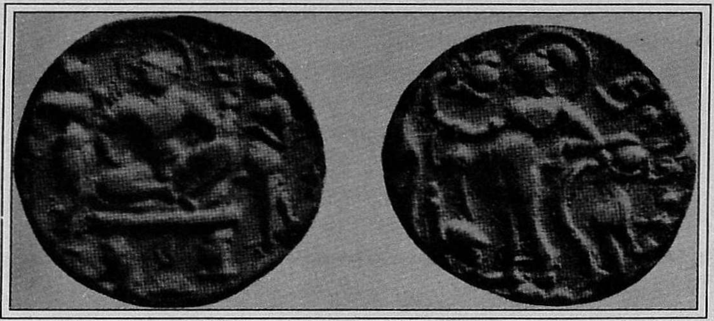


Fig. 85. Gold coin of Narendrāditya, unidentified Gupta type, 7th century A.D., King nimbate seated on throne with head to left, attended by a lady on either side legend above Yama, beneath couch letter Dha, reverse showing goddess Lakshmī nimbate standing, holding lotus in right hand and with lotuses around her and a swan near her feet, legend Śrī Narendrādityaḥ; Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dyn., Pl. XXIV, 5.

niśitavidagdhamatigāndharvalalitair
vrīḍitatridaśapatigurutumburunāradādeḥ

—*Corp. Inscr. Ind.*, iii, 8.

In the lyrist type of coin of Samudragupta (Fig. 84), there is a beautiful picture on the obverse where the king is shown seated on a couch with the *vīṇā* on his lap, his fingers thrumming the strings of the instrument. It certainly recalls the verse of Kālidāsa

aṅkam aṅkaparivartanochite tasya ninyatur
aśūnyatām ubhe
vallakī cha hṛidayaṅgamasvanā valguvāg
api cha vāmalochanā

—*Raghuvamśa*, xix, 13.

Samudragupta's fondness for the *vīṇā* is not at all surprising as it was the queen among musical instruments.

vīṇā hi namāsamudrotthitam ratnam

—*Mṛichchhakaṭika*, iii.

Abode of wealth and learning : He was not only proficient in the fine arts, which he assiduously fostered, but was also a great scholar and often a polymath like Bhoja of Dhārā or Mahendravarman of Kāñchī. In describing Harshavardhana, Bāṇa waxes eloquent and describes him as the abode of the goddesses of Prosperity and of Learning, whose domain was demarcated, as it were, by the string of pearls that adorned his neck.

śrīsarasvatyorurovadanopabhogavibhāgas-
utreṇeva pātitena śesheṇeva cha
tadbhujastambha—
vinyastasamastabhūbhāralabdhaviśrānti-
sukhaprasuptena hāradaṇḍena
parivalitakandharam,

—*Harshacharita*, ii, p.

A Gupta coin, which is not definitely attributed to any monarch, bears interesting figures, both on the obverse and reverse, and also a legend on the latter, *Narendrāditya* (Fig. 85). The reverse shows a king seated on a *siṁhāsana*, or lion-throne, and two damsels approach him from either side. On the back, the coin shows a lady amidst lotuses with a swan near her feet. To understand this coin we have only to see a verse from Kālidāsa, in which is Sunandā's description of the prince of Aṅga, who was at once the abode of the goddess of Prosperity and of Learning.

nisargabhinnāspadam ekasamstham asmin
dvayam śrīścha sarasvatī cha
kāntyā girā sūnṛitayā cha yogyā tvam eva
kalyāṇi tayos tṛitīyā

— *Raghuvamśa*, vi, 29.

Sunandā asks princess Indumatī to be the third spouse of the prince of Aṅga, along with the other two goddesses, as she was well fitted for it

by her sweet address and beauty of form. This idea is conveyed in the coin, where the king is shown flanked by the goddess of Learning and of Prosperity. On the back there is a goddess whose figure suggests the queen, who is comparable to the goddess of Royal Fortune herself. The lotuses and swan symbolize beauty and sweet address, the two essential qualities in the princess that Sunandā drew attention to, the beautiful form and sweet address being characteristic of the goddess of Prosperity and of Learning respectively.

The king is conceived of as of the essence of Vishṇu and that accounts for the association of Śrī and Sarasvatī as his consorts. Though the consorts of Vishṇu are Śrī and Bhūdevī in South India, it is Śrī and Sarasvatī in North India. The explanation of these is to be sought in the concept itself of Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī as the consorts of Vishṇu. Vishṇu is conceived as Purushottama, wearing *kirīṭa* and *vanamālā* (garland of wild flowers), decked in the costliest *pītambara* (yellow silk), wearing the priceless *kaustubha* gem, and carrying the martial conch and *gadā* (club), the wheel of power and the *līla-kamala* (sportive lotus), suggestive of the fine taste of one of the noblest birth, well-versed in the fine arts, and enjoying the leisure assured by prosperity and rank. As the Emperor of Emperors he has both royal prosperity (Lakshmī) and the whole earth (Bhūdevī), suggestive of world-empire, as his two consorts. In the Tamil *meykīrtis* (royal eulogies) of the Choḷa and Pāṇḍya kings, *pūmaḍandai* and *nilamaḍandai* (the Goddess of Flowers, i.e. lotus and Goddess of the Earth), also called *tirumagal* and *nilacchelvi* or *malarmagal* and *nilamagal*, Lakshmī and Bhūdevī are described as the wives of rulers, and similarly in Sanskrit literature it is a very common idea. The coming together of Śrī and Sarasvatī, prosperity and learning, in one abode, is always difficult, and in descriptions of the glory of the great kings, their royal splendour and learning are emphasised by styling them as the abode of Śrī and Sarasvatī. The climax of this conception is Purushottama with Śrī and Sarasvatī as his consorts. His human representative, the king, was equally the lord of both.

parasparavirodhinyor
ekasamśrayadurlabham
saṅgamam śrīsarasvatyor bhūtayestu sadā
satām

—*Vikramorvaśīyam*, v, 24.

The presence of a halo for the king on the throne, flanked by the damsels in the Gupta coin, is especially significant, as it suggests the divine essence of the king.

His aesthetic taste : In describing a prince at the *svayamvara* of Indumatī, Kālidāsa gives us a picture of the aesthetic sense of the youth who gently turned a lotus which he held by its long stalk in his hand.

kaśchit karābhyām upagūḍhanāḷam
alolapatrābhihatadvirepham
rajobhirantaḥ pariveshabandhi līlāravindam
bhramayāñchakāra

—*Raghuvamśa*, vi, 12.

The lotus in the hand of the prince is a symbol of his aesthetic taste and a life of leisure, on the cultural side, quite apart from his valour on the battlefield and his worries as an administrator of the state.

The couch-type of coin of Chandragupta II (Fig. 86) shows the king seated on a couch with a lotus in his right hand, the left resting on the seat, his left foot placed on a jewelled foot-rest. Beneath the couch is the legend *rupākṛiti*, significantly conveying a picture of his beauty and the lotus emphasises his aesthetic sense which, coupled with his beauty only adds fragrance to the golden rose.

A sacrificer : The king was a great follower of Dharma. In a Gupta seal from Bhīṭa there is the legend *dharmo rakshati rakshitaḥ, i.e. Dharma,* well followed, protects.

The king followed dharma, not for his own sake, but for the good of his people. How precious was the king's life for the welfare of the people is voiced by Kālidāsa in the line

jīvan punas śaśvadupaplavebhyaḥ prajāḥ
prajānātha piteva pāsi

—*Raghuvamśa*, ii, 48.

Fig. 86. Gold coin of Chandragupta II, Gupta, 4th century A.D., obverse showing King nimbate wearing waist cloth, and ornaments seated on high-backed couch, holding flower in right hand, his left hand resting on couch, legend below couch near foot-stool rūpākriti and around deva Śri Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Chandraguptasya, ; Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins Gupta Dynasty, Pl. VI, 9.

Fig. 87. Lead coin of Śrī Chandra Sātavāhana, 2nd century A.D., obverse showing horse standing opposite sacrificial post, legend in Brāhmī, Rana Siri Cada Sātisa, Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins, Andhra Dyn., W. Kshatra, Traikut, Bodhi Dynasty, Pl. VI, G.P. 3.

Fig. 88. Gold coin of Samudragupta, Gupta, 4th century A.D., obverse showing horse before sacrificial post with its pennons flying above the animal, beneath horse letter Si and legend around Rājādhirājāh prithivim avitvā divam jayatyaprativāyavīryaḥ; reverse showing chief queen nimbate standing wearing loose robe and ornaments carrying flywhisk in right hand resting on her shoulder, opposite her sacrificial spear with fillet, lotus supporting queen's feet, legend to right Aśvamedhaparākramaḥ; Cat. Ind. coins, Cat. Coins, Gupta Dynasty, Pl. V, 9.

sarvatra no vārtam avehi rājan nāthe kutas
tvayyaśubham prajānām
sūrye tapatyāvaraṇāya dṛishṭeḥ kalpeta
lokasya katham tamisrā

—*Raghuvamśa, v, 13.*

as he is so sure that there could be nothing wanting in the prosperity of the subjects, when there was the ideal king.

puruhūtadhvajasyeva
tasyonnayanapaṅktayaḥ
navābhyutthānadarśinyo nanandus saprajāḥ
prajāḥ

—*Raghuvamśa,* iv, 8.

The king propitiated the gods for the welfare of his subjects.

dudoha gām sa yajñāya sasyāya maghavā
divam
sampadvinimayenobhau dadhatur
bhuvanadvayam

—*Raghuvamśa,* i, 26.

His constant sacrifices, duly performed in accordance with the prescribed rites, satisfied Indra and the other denizens of heaven, who assured timely rains and agricultural prosperity on earth. We have graphic descriptions in inscriptions, as for instance in the Nanāghāt cave, where Śātakarṇī's munificent gifts in several sacrifices performed by him are mentioned. The Vākāṭakas are described as having performed several Aśvamedha sacrifices, and we learn that the early Pallava kings, like Śivaskandavarman, performed several sacrifices like Agnishṭoma, Aptoryāma, Ukthya, Shoḍaśī, Atirātra, Sādyaskra, Soma, Vājapeya, etc. The Gupta kings performed the Aśvamedha sacrifice and have left their impress on their coins of the Aśvamedha type. The earliest coins showing the Aśvamedha sacrifice are those of the Sātavāhanas wherein the horse, the most important element in the sacrifice, is pictured (Fig. 87). The Aśvamedha, like the Rājasūya, was performed by the Emperor not only for the welfare of his subjects, but also to establish his supremacy over other kings, whom he vanquished, and to earn for himself a place in heaven. The motif of the horse, before the sacrificial post, in the Sātavāhana coins is more graphically presented on the coins of the Guptas, like the Aśvamedha type of coin of Samudragupta and others (Fig. 88). On the

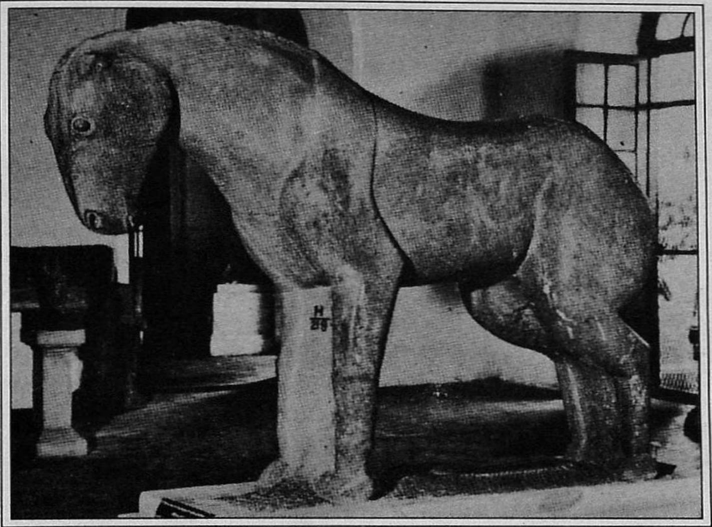


Fig. 89. Memorial for sacrificial horse, Gupta, 4th century A.D., Lucknow Musuem.

obverse a horse is presented near the sacrificial post, adorned with streamers, and on the reverse a lady stands with flywhisk in her right hand opposite the *yūpa* (post). The horse, the foremost limb of the sacrifice, is presented here prominently in accordance with the stress of its importance in the line of Kālidāsa

tad aṇgam agryam maghavan mahākrator
amum turaṅgam pratimoktum arhasi
—*Raghuvamśa*, iii, 46.

The animal is immortalised by a stone replica of it set up as its memorial in the place of the sacrifice, and examples of it are known, like the one in the Lucknow Museum (Fig. 89). Even Indra trembled at the possibility of the earthly kings eclipsing his own immortal glory by this great sacrifice.

jagatprakāśam tad aśesham ijyayā
bhavadgurur laṅghāyitum mamodyataḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, iii, 48.

The sacrifice was at a tremendous cost, that reduced the mightiest emperor to a beggar temporarily, as all his wealth was given away as gift to others, in feeding, clothing and entertaining huge concourses. No wonder that Raghu, the mighty Emperor, who brought home fabulous wealth after his world conquest, but left with only an earthen pot in his hand, at the end of the Viśvajit sacrifice, still appeared beautiful and majestic like the moon, in attenuated form after the gods had drunk up his ambrosial form.

śariramātreṇa narendra tishṭhannābhāsi
tīrthapratipāditardhiḥ
āraṇyakopāttaphalaprasūtis
stambena nīvāra ivāvaśishṭaḥ
sthāne bhavān ekanarādhipas
sannakiñchanatvam makhajam vyanakti
paryāyapītasya surair himāmśoḥ
kalākshayas ślāghyataro hi vṛiddheḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, v, 15—16.

This not only meant the emptying of the treasury of the king but also an amount of physical ordeal. When he assumed the garb of the sacrificer he became unapproachable, of the essence of Maheśvara himself, and carried a staff of Audumbara wood, wore the skin of an antelope, a waist-string of *kūśa*-grass and an antelope's horn was fixed to his

Fig. 90.

Fig. 91.

Fig. 90. Gold coin of Samudragupta showing Chandragupta I and Kumāradevī, Gupta, 4th century A.D., obverse showing Chandragupta nimbate standing to left wearing closefitting coat, trousers and ornaments, holding standard in left hand and offering a ring held in right hand to Kumāradevī nimbate who stands on left facing the king wearing under and upper garments and ornaments, legend on either side of standard Camdra and Gupta and on left Kumāradevī; Cat. Ind. Coins. Cat. Coins, Gupta Dynasty, Pl. III.

Fig. 91. Gold coin of Samudragupta showing Chandragupta I and Kumāradevī, Gupta, 4th century A.D., reverse showing goddess Lakshmī, nimbate, facing, on couchant lion, carrying noose in right hand and cornucopia in left arm, her feet resting on lotus, legend to right Lichchhavayaḥ; Cat. Ind. Coins, Cat. Coins, Gupta Dynasty, Pl. III.

hand to avoid the use of his fingers in scratching his body.

ajinadaṇḍabhṛitam kuśamekhalām
yatagiram mṛigaśṛiṅgaparigrahām
adhivasamstanum adhvaradīkshitām
asamabhāsam abhāsayad īśvaraḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, ix, 28.

sadogatas trilochanaikāmśatayā durāsadaḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, iii, 66.

As in some of the Gupta coins, like the *chhatra* type (Fig. 76), where the king is shown offering *āhutī* in a *homa-kuṇḍa,* sacrificial pit, there are earlier representations of the king performing the ordinary sacrifices prescribed for the welfare of the world alone, and not for symbolising any special prowess of his in vanquishing rival kings on earth. The Kushāṇ coins, like those of Kaṇishka, Huvishka, and Vāsudeva, show the king offering *havis* or *ājya* at the behest of the priest, whose miraculous power of penance added to its efficacy.

havir āvarjītam hotas tvayā vidhivad
agnishu
vṛishṭir bhavati sasyānām
avagrahaviśoshiṇām
—*Raghuvamśa*, i, 62.

His sampatti or resources :Without adequate resources it is impossible for a ruler to discharge his duties effectively. Of these the most important were power and finance. The *Arthasāśtra* of Kauṭilya lays great stress on the *kośa*, or the treasury of the king, and on *daṇḍa* his military equipment. There are several inscriptions that specially mention how the treasury of the king over-flowed with wealth, but sufficient care is taken to stress that it was all well-earned accroding to *dharma.*

aharahar dānamānanavamānaśīlena
sthūlalaksheṇa yathāvatprāptair
baliśulkabhāgaiḥ kanakarajatavajravai
dūryaratnopachayavishyandamānakośena
—*Epigraph, Ind.*, vii, p. 44.

And his *balasampatti*, or military equipment, is also specified. A well governed kingdom increased the finance and power of the king, the two essential factors for a ruler. Kālidāsa draws pointed attention to this aspect when he says

sutāvasūta sampannau kośadaṇḍāviva
kshitiḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, xv, 13.

This idea is graphically presented on the reverse of the coin of Chandragupta and Kumāradevī(Fig. 91). Here Lakshmī is shown with her feet resting on a lotus, which is her emblem, carrying the cornucopia, the horn of plenty, and, with a noose, seated on a lion and thereby signifying that she is on a *siṁhāsana* and therefore is Rājyalakshmī, the Goddess of royal fortune. This type of *siṁhāsana* is even later found carved for the use of the Pallava monarch, Narasimhavarman, at Mahābalipuram. The goddess carries the noose, the instrument of *daṇḍa* or punishment and the receptacle of *kośa* or treasure. The noose and the cornucopia therefore suggest *daṇḍa* and *kośa,* recalling the line of Kālidāsa where *kshiti* or earth is only Rājyalakshmī.

Wedded to his Queen and Fortune : The king in spite of his large harem, was devoted to his chief queen to whom alone he considered himself truly wedded, as the king was particular about his *dharmaprajā* or illustrious progeny, *prajāyai gṛihamedhiṅām*—*Raghuvamśa*, i, 7. Through his queen, to whom he was truly married and who was in every sense the *patnī*, and by the lady of fortune Lakshmī, whom all kings figuratively wed, the king considered himself a married man.

kalatravantam ātmānam avarodhe
mahatyapi
tayā mene manasvinyā lakshmyā cha
vasuḍhādhipaḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, i, 32.

This idea is beautifully portrayed on the obverse of the coin of Chandragupta and Kumāradevī where the king and queen are shown together with legends giving their names (Fig. 90), and as the reverse presents Rājyalakshmī we can easily understand that the queen in flesh and blood being the *manasvinī* is shown in closer contact with her lord on the same side and just opposite him. The king and queen type also

occurs amongst the coins of Skandagupta.

His Śakti : The king was distinguished by his great power. His power of *śakti* was infinite. It was always the ideal for every king possessed of sufficient strength to establish his supremacy over all the kings on earth, so that his wheel of power could be supreme everywhere and, he, as the wielder of wheel, be Chakrī, Vishṇu, himself. An important and unique coin of the Guptas, recently discovered in the Bayānā hoard, represents king Chandragupta standing opposite a deity and receiving something respectfully (Fig. 50). The legend given here is *Chakravikrama.* The deity is surrounded by a huge wheel-shaped halo and has a single pair of arms, one of which holds a *gadā* and the other three pellets, which he offers to the king. The king stands opposite and receives the offering with pleasure. Significantly there is a sword hanging from his belt. With the help of the legend and from our knowledge of the usual representation of Sudarśanachakra in anthropomorphic form, we can easily see that Chakrapurusha is sought to be represented as favouring the king, a distinguished prince of an extremely devoted Bhāgavata family, with the *śakti* or divine power, so essential for making him a great emperor. It is thus a grateful acknowledgement by the pious king of the source of his strength—from the Chakra, the powerful weapon of the Lord, who was their family deity. For understanding this *śakti* or *vikrama* which is shown in the form of three pellets a line of Kālidāsa comes to our aid.

> *asūta putram śamaye sachīsamā*
> *trisādhanā śaktir ivārtham akshayam*
> —*Raghuvamśa*, iii, 13.

The *śakti* of the king here is described as three-fold, *prabhu, mantra,* and *utsāha,* overwhelming personality, good counsel, and infinite enthusiasm. These three are suggested by the three pellets presented by Chakrapurusha.

The darling of his subjects : A king who so entirely devoted himself for the welfare of his subjects was loved by all. The love the people bore for their ruler in ancient India is given graphically in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, where we have a picture of how enthusiastically the people of Ayodhyā, with one voice declared their joy at the prospect of having Rāma as their crown prince. They picture to themselves the noble personality of the prince, seated on the state elephant, with an umbrella held over him to shade his moon-like face from the sun, and recount the noble qualities of the prince who would ever smile when he spoke to any of his men, however lowly, reassuring him by his smile before he addressed him, realising that it was natural that in such royal presence even the highest in the land would be filled with awe, not to speak of the humblest.

> *ichchhāmo hi mahābāhum raghuvīram*
> *mahābalam*
> *gajena mahatā yāntam rāmam*
> *chhatrāvṛitānanam*
> —*Rāmāyaṇa*, ii, 2, 22.

But with Rāma, the darling of his subjects, who considered the joy of his subjects as much his own as their sorrows, and accordingly felt elated or depressed, the reassuring smile made the people at once feel at home in his presence.

> *vyasaneshu manushyāṇām bhṛiśam bhavati*
> *duḥkhitaḥ*
> *utsaveshu cha sarveshu piteva paritushyati*
> *smitapurvābhibhāshī cha dharmam*
> *sarvātmanā śritaḥ*
> —*Rāmāyaṇa*, ii, 2, 40—42.

recalling the line from the Nāsik inscription of Balasiri describing Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi

> *porajananivisesasamasukhadukhasa*
> —*Epigraph, Ind.*, vii, p.60.

and the sweet verse from Kālidāsa picturing Atithi

> *prasannamukharāgam tam*
> *smitapūrvābhibhāshiṇam*
> *mūrtimantam amanyanta viśvāsam*
> *anujīvinaḥ*
> —*Raghuvamśa*, xvii, 31.

It is this Rāma his people welcomed as their crown prince with joy. This joy of theirs is

expressed by Kālidāsa in a singularly effective manner, when he describes how the news of Rāma's elevation individually gladdened the heart of every citizen, as water, reached through channels, refreshes, individually, every plant in a pleasure garden, well looked after.

sā paurān paurakāntasya
rāmasyābhyudayaśrutiḥ
pratyekam hlādayāñchakre
kulyevodyānapādapān

—*Raghuvamśa*, xii, 3.

It is not without reason that the king was so beloved by his people. Probably the description of the loving people of Ayodhyā following Rāma, leaving their homes to accompany him even to the forest, is only matched by another pathetic and loving picture presented by Bhavabhūti, in his *Mahāvīracharita*, where the old and learned sacrificers, Vājapeyayājins, whose only possession was a white umbrella presented by the state, run posthaste to shade Rāma from the sun with their umbrella, as they could not bear the sight of their beloved prince walking on foot, bareheaded in the fierce sun, to reach the Daṇḍaka forest.

skandhāropitayajñapātranichayās svair
vājapeyārjitaiḥ
chhatrair vārayitum tavārkakiraṇānste te
mahābrāhmaṇāḥ
sāketās sahamaithilair
anupatatpatnīgṛihītāgnayaḥ
prākprasthāpitahomadhenava ime dhāvanti
vṛiddhā api

—*Mahāvīracharita*, iv, 57.

Every subject, as Kālidāsa describes in another context, felt that the king was particularly attached to him, and the ruler conducted himself in such a way that this complacency was possible in the case of everyone amongst his people.

aham eva matō mahīpater iti sarvaḥ
prakṛitishvachintayat
udadher iva nimnagāśateshvabhavannāsya
vimānanā kvachit

—*Raghuvamśa*, viii, 8.

The picture of Rāma on his state elephant with umbrella over his head is not easily forgotten. His subjects longed often to see him thus. Kālidāsa recalls a picture of King Atithi, the son of Kuśa and Kumudvatī, similarly riding an elephant, with great splendour and with the royal umbrella held over him, the umbrella denied to all others and vouchsafed for him alone, proclaiming him the Emperor on earth, like Indra in heaven, and removing the affliction of the entire world, caused by the separation from the former kings.

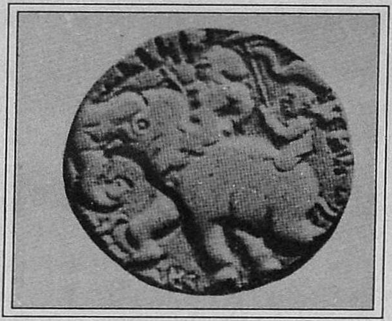


Fig. 92. Gold coin of Kumāragupta I, Gupta, 5th century A.D., obverse showing King with goad in right hand, riding elephant advancing left, behind the King is seated an attendant holding umbrella over him, traces of legend which is lost; Cat. Ind. Coins Cat. Coins, Gupta Dynasty, Pl. XV, 16.

A splendid example of this endearing theme of the Emperor riding the state elephant in all his glory, with the royal umbrella raised over his head, is found in the elephant rider type of coin of Kumāragupta (Fig. 92). The love that his subjects bore for him may well be judged by the description of it in the case of his son Skandagupta as recorded in his Bhitarī inscription

charitam amalakirter gīyate yasya śubhram
diśi diśi paritushṭair ākumāram manushyaiḥ

—*Corp. Inscr., Ind.*, iii, p. 54.

which was entirely due to his pleasant manners and affectionate attitude towards his people as voiced in his Girnār inscription.

samrañjayāncha prakṛitīr babhūva
pūrvasmitābhāshaṇamānadānaiḥ
nīryantraṇānyonyagrihapraveśaiḥ
samvardhitaprītigṛihopachāraiḥ

—*Corp. Inscr. Ind.*, iii, p.60.

II MEMORIALS II

The memory of those who distinguished themselves as martyrs to the cause of the king, country or fellowmen has ever been kept alive by memorials raised for them. Numerous memorials exist all over the land proclaiming great events through sculptured stones with explanatory inscriptions revealing the purpose for which they are intended. These hero-stones adorn villages and are known as *Vīrakals* in South India and the Deccan where they abound. If the long *praśastis* of great kings and emperors proclaim in sublime language, in long and pompous inscriptions, the great exploits of huge armies arrayed in battle on different battlefields and narrate the glory or disgrace of the one or the other, the victor or the vanquished, a story of glory or of woe, these humbler memorial stones in more affectionate terms, coming from a small

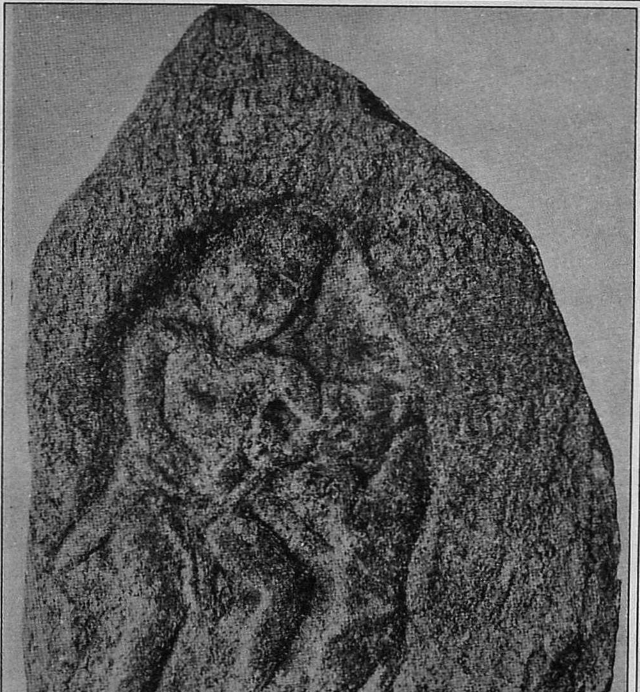


Fig. 93. Memorial for a hero who fought and slew a tiger, Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Kīḷmuttugūr, South India.

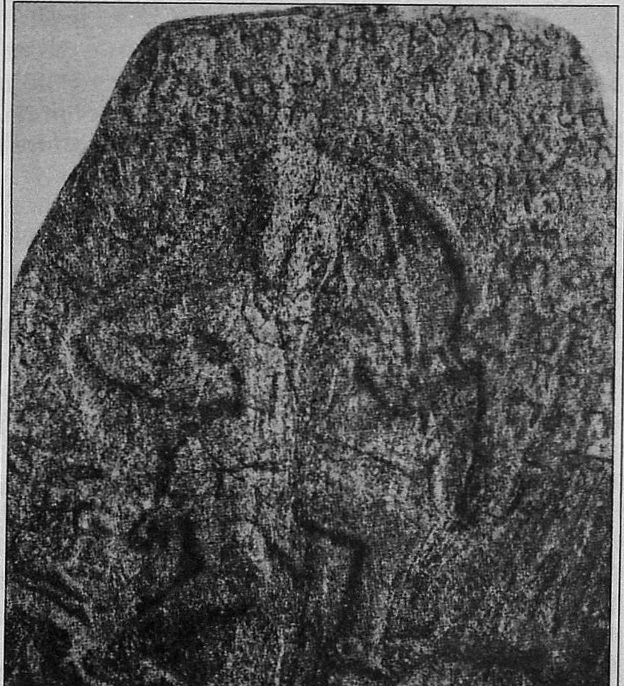


Fig . 94. Gograhaṇa warrior memorial, Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Kīḷmuttugūr, South India.

circle of people known personally to the individual for whom the memorial was erected, testify to the noble effort of one who laid down his life for what he considered the good of his village or his neighbours.

A memorial for a hero was set up during the reign of king Parāntaka in the Choḷa realm to commemorate the great fight a villager put up with a fierce man-eater to rid his beloved village of this dangerous menace. On the spot where he fought and killed the animal the slab was erected with the figure of the hero fighting the tiger with an inscription describing the gratitude of the villagers (Fig. 93).

Cattle formed the greatest wealth of the villagers and the cruel enemy always tried to attack the wealth most coveted, the cattle. This was considered enough provocation for a fight. The owners in turn returned the blow and thus started small skirmishes of *Gograhaṇa* which developed later into larger battles. A classical instance of *Gograhaṇa* occurs in the *Mahābhārata* where the Kauravas started their affray by placing their hands on the cattle of the king of Virāṭa. We have several sculptural representations of *Gograhaṇa,* and the hero of a village, who died fighting to defend the cattle, was honoured by a memorial stone showing the scene of his valorous fight on the battlefield in defence of the cattle and with an inscription describing the purpose of the memorial. From Kīlmuttugūr there is such a memorial stone of the Choḷa period showing the hero fighting in the vicinity of the cattle for protecting them (Fig. 94). Two of late Pallava date come from Āmbūr. The inscription in the former runs-*Śrī madiraikoṇḍa ko pparakesaripanmarr-iyāṇḍ-irubattonbadāvadu Perumānaḍigalān-Mukkuṭṭūr toru-kkoḷḷa mīṭṭupaṭṭan Vadunavāraṇ Varadan-Tāṇḍan, (Epigraph Ind.,* IV, p. 179) and the term for cattlelifting is *toru-kkolla.* In these *Gograhaṇa* fights it was not so much for the wealth lost or gained that a severe battle was waged; it was just a ruse for fighting on the part of those who captured the cattle and it was equally a fight by the opponents to establish their valour and self-respect; and between them the cattle, the most honoured of

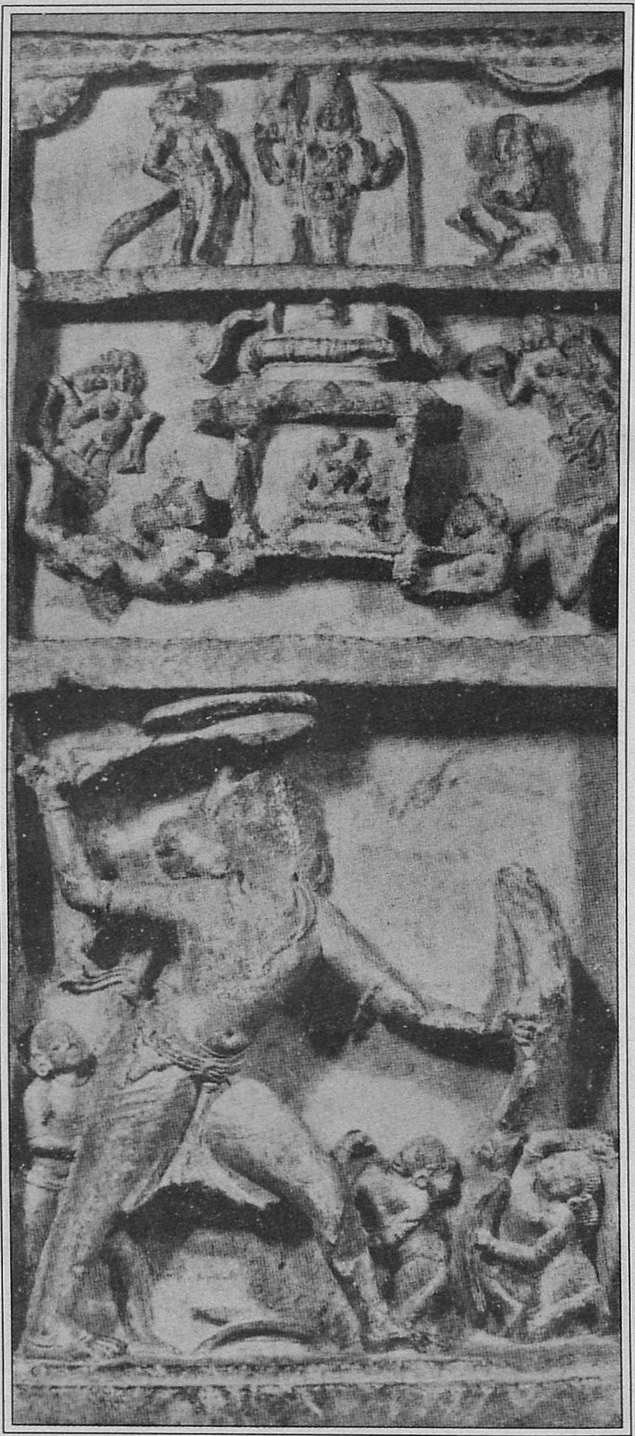


Fig. 95. Hero-stone showing the hero proceeding in celestial car attended by nymphs, 12th century A.D., Bihar.

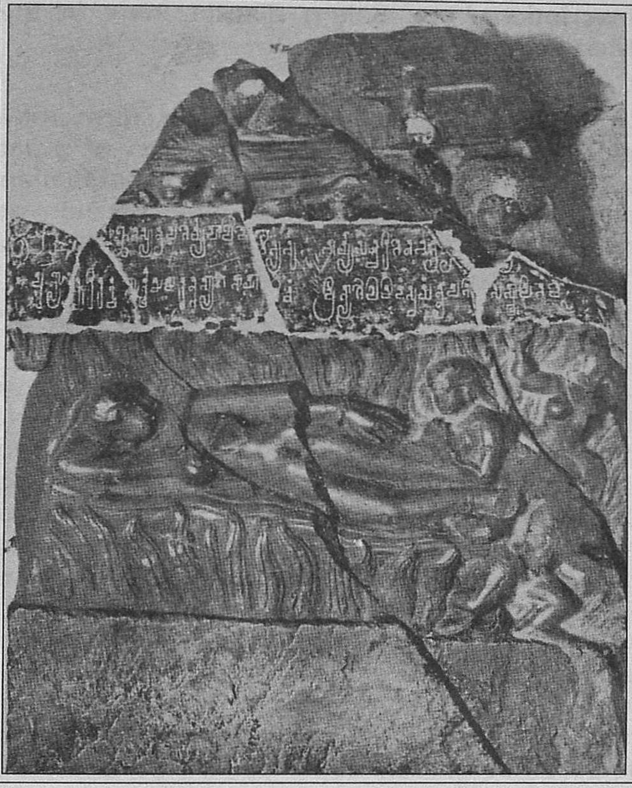


Fig. 96. Memorial for a beloved queen, Hālidevī, raised by her husband, 5th century A.D., Western India.

the four-footed beings, came in to raise the sentiment of the fighting warrior to great heights of heroism and glory, almost as Macaulay has put it 'for the ashes of his fathers, for the temples of his gods.'

There are other memorials showing the hero fighting for his king most loyally and laying down his life with joy in the service of his chief. It was in this spirit that all the great heroes of the Mahābhārata war fought on the side of Duryodhana. *Vīrasvarga* is vividly portrayed in these hero-stones (Fig. 95) in the spirit of the verse of Kālidāsa.

kaśchid dvishatkhaḍgaḥritottamāṅgas
sadyo vimānaprabhutām upetya
vāmāṅgasamsaktasurāṅganas svam
nṛityatkabandham samare dadarśa
—*Raghuvamśa, vii, 51.*

There is the *vimāna* shown aloft proceeding to heaven with the spirit of the warrior, attended by celestial nymphs waving *chaurīs.* The heroeś heaven is the highest and, according to the faith behind this notion of *Vīrasvarga,* the hero goes there straight, piercing the orb of the sun, as he falls dead on the battlefield.

Even an animal, like a favourite hound that died valorously, after fighting and vanquishing a boar, was given a special memorial stone by its noble master, with an inscription in early Canarese describing the event (*Epigraph Ind.,* VI, p. 56). This slab, now in the Museum at Bangalore, is a positive proof of the great value that people in ancient India attached to the divine quality of valour, chivalry and heroism.

The lady who ascended the funeral pyre of her husband after his death was transformed, as it were, into an eternal lady of light, worthy of the highest worship, never to suffer the pangs of widowhood and ever marked by the sign of wifehood. Noble examples of *satī* from the pages of history are Yaśomatī, the queen of Prabhākaravardhana, and Vānavanmahādevī, the queen of Sundara Choḷa, and we know from inscriptions that there was a statue erected in honour of the latter, who was almost deified, by her daughter, the princess Kundavai. Memorials for such women abound in South India, specially in the Canarese districts. A raised hand with the bangles on the wrist suggestive of eternal wifehood, and the panel above, showing the lady united with her husband in heaven, the latter with his hands in adoration and admiration for his wife, more valorous than himself, that died in battle, and the inscription below, describing the purpose of the memorial, make it very clear what a position the *satī* held in the minds of the people who admired such great sacrifice. Of course it is not as if every woman committed *satī* or that *satī* was stopped only during the time of Lord William Bentinck, because we have a great plea for *satī* voiced by queen Yaśomatī, the mother of Harshavardhana, who insisted on putting an end to her life before the passing away of Prabhākaravardhana, then on his deathbed, and a more fervent plea voiced through the mouth of Harshavardhana himself, who, with a

cogent series of arguments, pleaded with his mother against that dreadful mode of putting an end to her life. A rare and early example of a memorial for a beloved queen by her husband comes from Western India (Fig. 96).

There are similar memorial stones of great *āchāryas*, set up by their disciples, as for instance the Vidyārāśi memorial with an inscription from Salem district, now in the Madras Museum.

Memorial stones, in whatever form they exist, only express the appreciation of great courage and valour, great qualities of noble men and women by means of suitable permanent records of such appreciation in tangible form.

|| PORTRAITS ||

This leads to another interesting theme, viz. portrait figures, statues representing individuals. In ancient India, as everywhere, there has been the craving for the likeness of the physical appearance of a person passed on to posterity by means of a tangible copy from the original in flesh and blood. In other words, there are several portrait statues of great personalities that have been handed down to generations separated by long intervals of time only by the chisel of the sculptor or the brush of the painter. These are distinguished by the appellation *Viddhachitra* which means a portrait statue. Among several statues that we know in India the portrait of Kaṇishka and some other Kushāṇ kings from Mathurā are famous. The donors in the Kanheri cave have their figures carved, indicating this custom of introducing portrait sculpture in appropriate context. Just as originally in the Cathedrals of England the kings laid down to rest had their figures carved with their hands in adoration, eternally thinking of the Almighty in their everlasting slumber, similarly here in India, where sculpture was always a handmaid of religion, and everything was subordinated to that aspect of Dharma, wherein every act was considered something in the service of God, the king had his portrait carved. This was not so much for proclaiming his pomp and splendour, his power and glory, but more to show him with his hands clasped in obeisance to the Almighty, as an humble suggestion of his piety and of his eternal vigil at the door of the Lord, and it was just an indication that he was ever at His service. It is not with the eyes closed in the sleep of death as in the Abbeys in Europe, but it is ever vigilant in life that the ruler is portrayed with his whole troop, with his queens and attendants, sometimes with whole trains of his followers, subordinating the entire realm in his charge to the will of the Almighty in Whose service they stood in that attitude of devotion. It is this interpretation that we must seek in the sculptures of Tirumala Nāyaka and his queens (Fig. 97), his ministers, his nobles and the huge troop of his followers that we find around him as he stands towards one end of a pillar supporting the pillared hall, that leads on to the main shrine, which is the abode of the Lord whom the king in

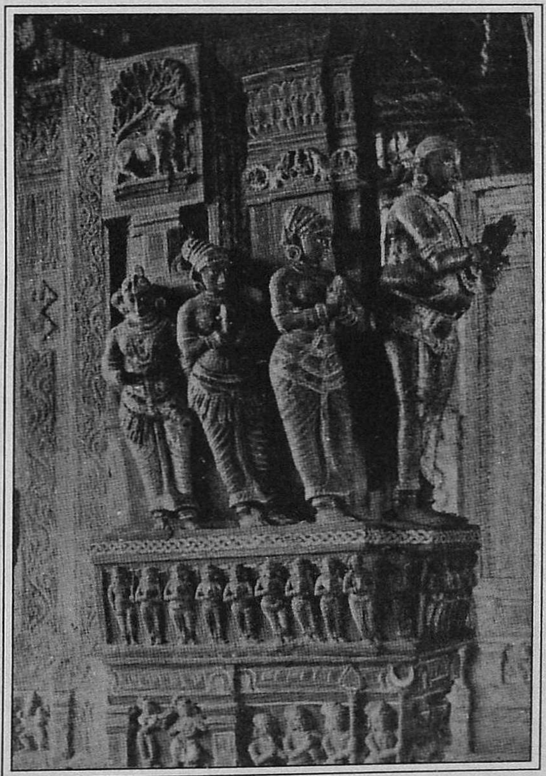


Fig. 97. Tirumala Nāyaka and his queens, Nāyak, 17th century A.D., Madurai, South India.

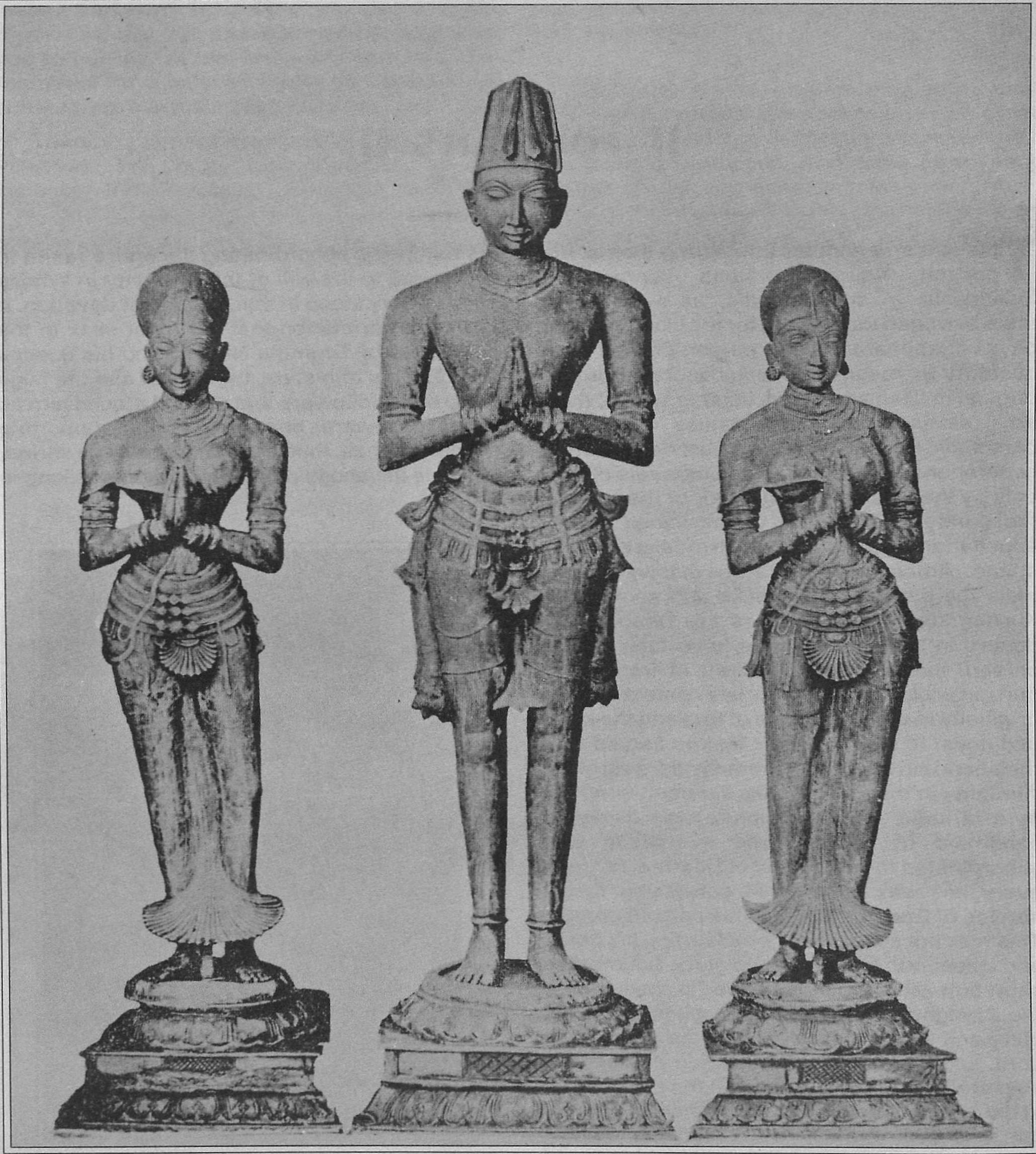


Fig. 98. Kṛishṇadevarāya and his queens, Vijayanagar, 16th century A.D., Tirupati, South India.

Fig. 99. Rājarāja with Karuvūrār,from contemporary painting, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Tañjāvūr, South India.

Fig. 100. Rājarāja adoring the Lord Āḍavallān (Naṭeśa) in Chidambaram, from contemporary painting, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Tañjāvūr, South India.

his petrified form eternally salutes. The most marvellous portrait sculptures of the mediaeval period are probably those of Kṛishṇadevarāya and his queens, in bronze, now eternally in adoration of the Lord at Tirupati on the hill (Fig. 98). Kṛishṇadevarāya was undoubtedly one of the most powerful of Indian monarchs, and the bronzes representing him are no doubt a great tribute to the sculptor of his realm and his skill in producing such wonderful portrait sculpture. Sometimes we find the king glorifying himself, not only in carving in stone, but in a glow of colours, in paintings covering the walls of huge edifices raised by him in honour of the God he worshipped. Such is the portrait of Rājarāja, whether with his preceptor Karuvūrār (Fig. 99), or in adoration of his favourite Āḍavallān, the dancing Lord Śiva, as we find him in some of the paintings in the Rājarājeśvara temple at Tañjāvūr (Fig. 100). The magnificent personality of this great emperor, who was a military genius of the first order, in humble submission with hands in *añjali* at the door of the Lord he loved and adored so well, is a masterpiece of the Choḷa painter.

Another great portrait shows a saintly king Gaṇḍarāditya, whose greatest pleasure lay in his devotion to the deity, traditionally worshipped by his forefathers, Śiva. And his wife, who was early widowed in life, with a small babe in arms, could think of no better purpose in life than engaging herself always in the service of God by raising several glorious temples as His abode. This great queen, Śembianmādevī, was also responsible for this glorious portrait of her husband, as a devotee, adoring Śiva, seated in

worship, in the vicinity of his beloved deity at Konerirājapuram (Fig. 101).

The portrait of Narasiṁhavarman (Fig. 103), the great Pallava king of Mahābalipuram, though depicting the greatest monarch, who was responsible for all the great monuments in the place, is nothing compared to the more important panels of Mahendravarman and Siṁhavishṇu depicted with their queens, and even here the modesty of the king and the great reverence with which the subjects are treated are obvious. Narasiṁhavarman himself is shown standing in simple fashion in a narrow strip of a panel in the Dharmarājaratha. But in a more magnificent panel in the Varāha cave his father Mahendravarman is standing leading his two queens (Fig. 104).

Another panel beyond this shows Siṁhavishṇu (Fig. 102), the father of Mahendravarman, for whom even greater respect is shown. In fact, it is Siṁhavishṇu, alone, of all these three royal portraits, that is depicted seated, and he is also attended by his two queens, one on either side of him. These portraits from Mahābalipuram show a peculiar charm in the representation of ancestors, indicating sensitively the reverence in degrees of a son to his father and to a grandfather, where the respect of the father to his own father is also to be indicated.

The great Hoysaḷa king Vishṇuvardhana has his portrait in the Belūr temple where he is shown seated in his royal court (Fig. 105). It is a glorious royal portrait. In Koṇārak there are several scenes from the life of the king, his exploits as a hero, his appreciation of poetry, his love in his harem (Fig. 106), his devotion to his religious preceptors (Fig. 107) and so forth. The love of a great Western Chāḷukya king of the Bādāmī line, for a great art-minded queen of his, is presented by the sculptor by showing his royal master with his hand on the neck of his beloved in close embrace, in the shrine of the Lord in whose service she revelled and for whom she erected that noble edifice (Fig. 110). A portrait of

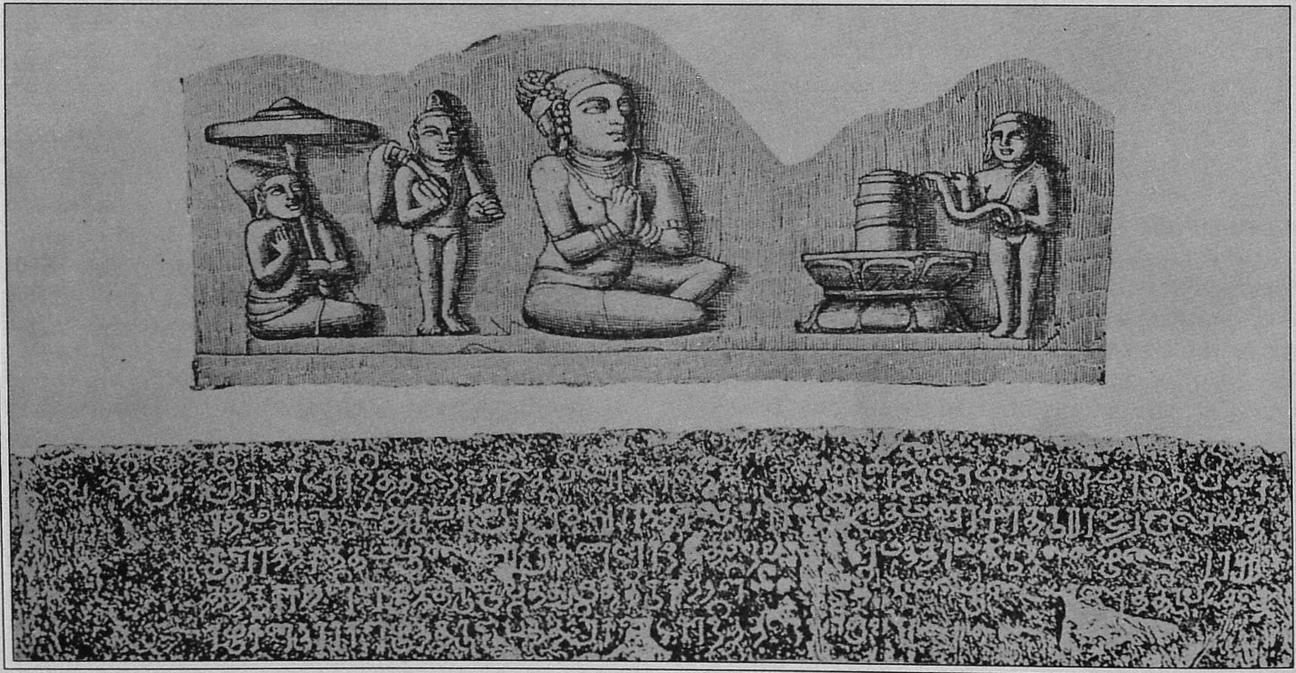


Fig. 101. Gaṇḍarāditya memorial panel by Śembianmādevī, Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Konerirājapuram, South India.

Fig. 102. Siṁhavishṇu and his queens, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahābalipuram, South India.

Fig. 103. Narasiṁhavarman, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahābalipuram, South India.

a princess in the famous Śiva temple at Śrīśailam is believed to represent Prabhāvatīgupta, the great Gupta princess, who became a Vākāṭaka queen and devoutly worshipped in that very temple. The great Śātakarṇīs had some magnificent portraits. In the Nānāghāṭ cave there were several Sātavāhana royal portraits, all of which are now lost, but of whose existence we very well know by the labels, in the script of the 2nd century B.C., which alone now survive.

Recently I lighted on a very important youthful portrait of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkarāchārya, of his own date, the 8th century A.D., from a Pallava shrine in Kāñchīpuram, the Airāvateśvara—(Fig. 108). Śaṅkarā here is a boy in his teens which is evident from the curls on his head with no corresponding beard or moustache. A necklace of rudrāksha beads adorns his neck. His hands are clasped and the *daṇḍa* is held against his chest. He has a beautiful face and a charming personality and though a monk, is alluring like Buddha. Śaṅkarā is seated beside Vyāsa, the great Ṛishi, who resuscitated the text of the *Vedas* and wrote the *Brahmasūtras,* which Śaṅkarā elucidated in his *Bhāshya.* Vyāsa is in a niche to the right of *Dakshiṇāmūrti,* who is shown in the larger central niche. In the niche to the left is the great sage Jaimini who wrote the *Mīmāmsā sūtras. Dakshiṇamūrti* is the lord of wisdom, youthful,

Fig. 104. Mahendravarman and his queens, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahābalipuram, South India

calm and silent, but dispelling all the doubts of aged seers, who form his troop of disciples.

The Veda teaches both the *karmakāṇḍa* and the *jñānakāṇḍa*. Jaimini and Vyāsa, the two Ṛishis who expounded the *Karmakāṇḍa* and the *Jñānakāṇḍa*, the *Pūrva* and the *Uttara Mīmāmsās*, flank the source of all knowledge, Dakshiṇāmūrti. Tradition has it that Śaṇkarā was commended by Vedavyāsa for writing the *Bhāshya* on the *Vedāntasūtras*. It is also believed that Vyāsa is an incarnation of Vishṇu—*dvibāhur aparo hariḥ*—and Śaṅkarā of Śiva—*śaṅkarās śaṅkarās sākshāt*. It is Śiva as Dakshiṇāmūrti, from under the banyan tree, that took birth on earth as the great Bhagavatpāda.

mūktvā maunam vaṭaviṭapino mūlato
nissarantī śambhor mūrtiś charati bhuvane
śaṅkarāchāryarūpā.

We do not know what purpose the Kushāṇ images of kings (Fig. 109) were intended for, and it is not unlikely that the generations of rulers represented in these portraits indicate some kind of *Devakula*, as we find described in Bhāsa's *Pratimānāṭaka* which appears to have been in vogue in ancient India. In this drama three generations of ancestors are mentioned as represented by portraits intended for family worship in private temples of the royal household. Daśaratha, Dilīpa and Raghu represented by means of portrait statues are noticed by Bharata in a *Devakula*, where the latest addition, when he is ignorant of Daśaratha's death, startles him. We know also that there were paintings of dead kings kept in a palace intended for funeral offerings which was known as *Balimanniketa*. The word used for connoting a person who is no more is also interesting in this context as it suggests this custom of pictorially representing the dead. *Ālekhyaśesha* is the term used by Kālidāsa, meaning thereby that all that is left of the person who is no more is just a portrait.

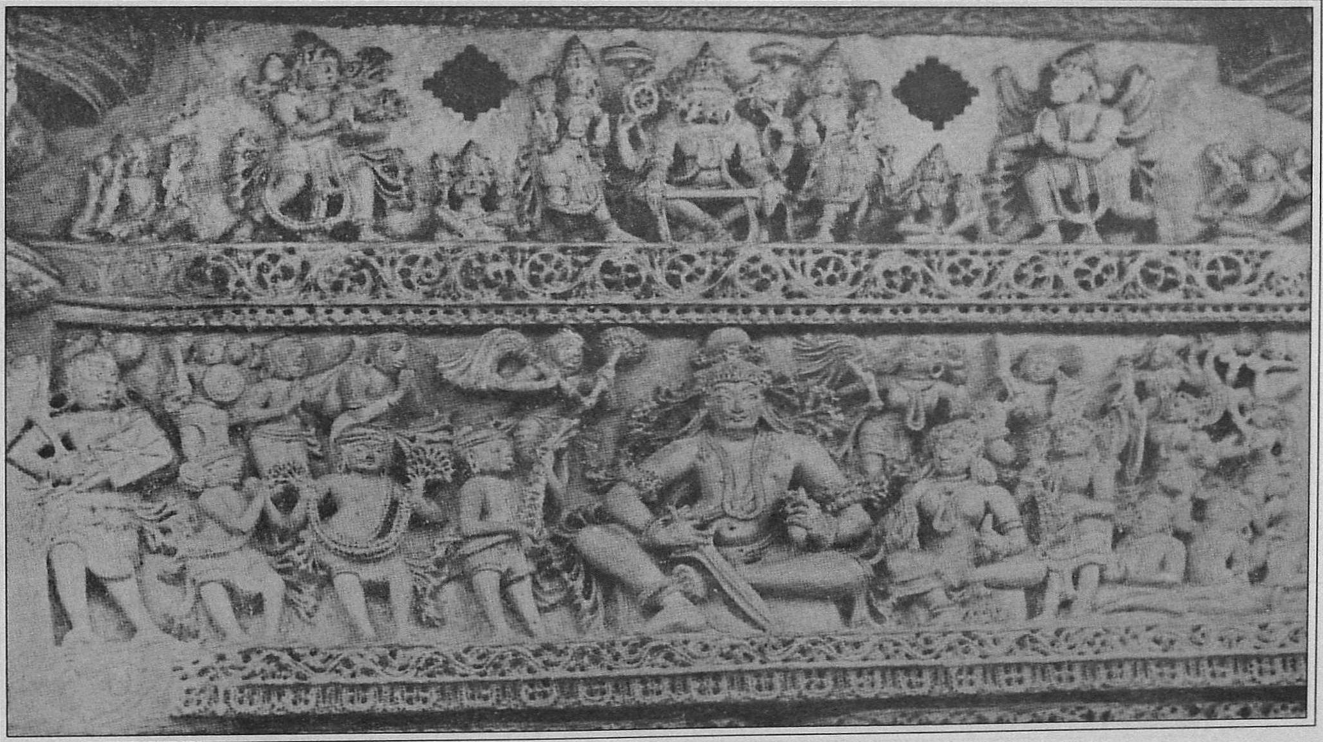


Fig. 105. Vishṇuvardhana in court, Hoysaḷa, 12th century A.D., Belūr, Mysore.

Fig. 106. Narasiṁha on swing in harem, Eastern Gaṅgā, 13th century A.D., Koṇārak, Orissa.

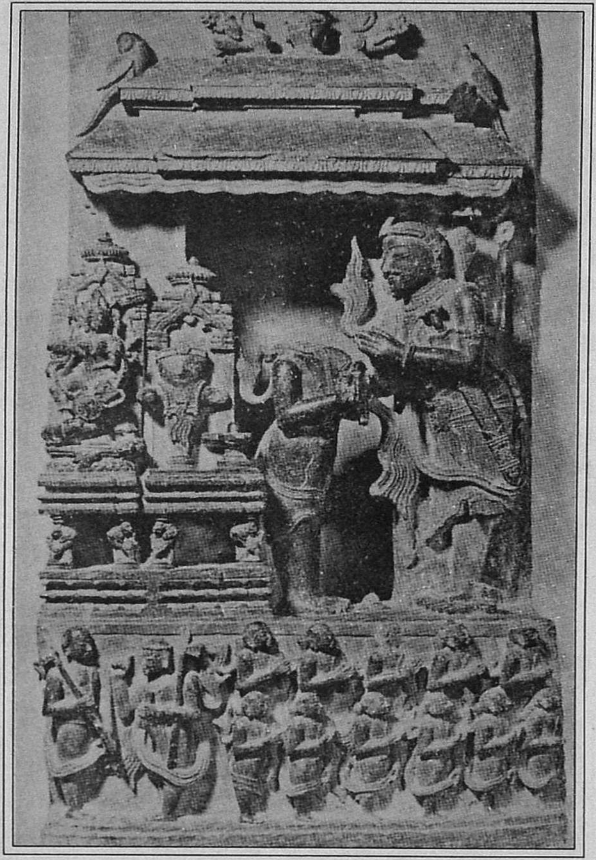


Fig. 107. Narasiṁha adoring deities, Eastern Gaṅgā, 13th century A.D., Koṇārak, Orissa.

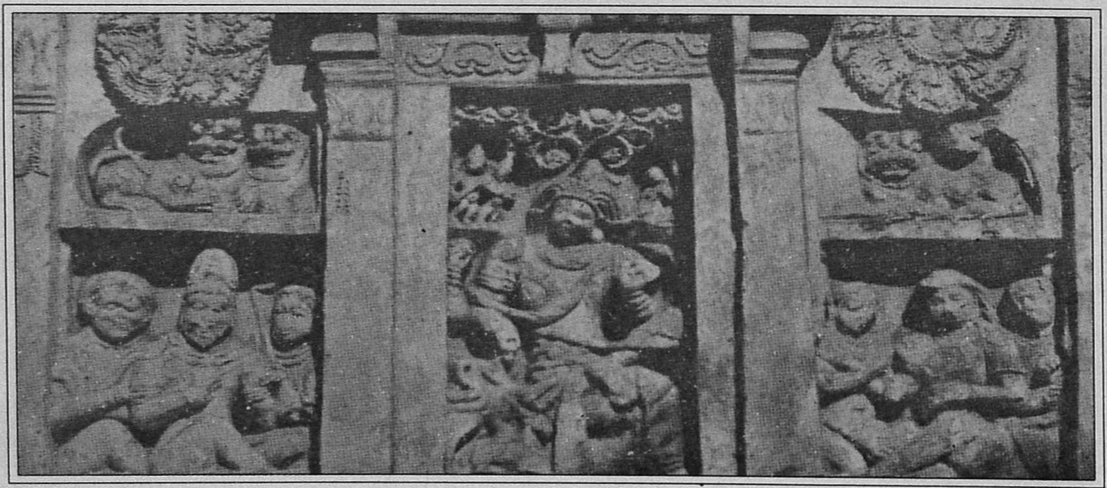


Fig. 108. Portrait of Śaṅkarā, Pallava, 8th century A.D., Kāñchīpuram, South India.

Fig. 110. Vikramāditya and queen, Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D., Paṭṭaḍakal, Western India.

Fig. 109. Portrait of Kanishka, Kushāṇa, Ist century A.D., Mathurā Museum.

bashpāyamāno balimanniketam
ālekhyaśeshasya pitur viyeśa
—Raghuvamśa, xiv, 15.

Such special palaces and temples intended for ancestors were different from the regular temples provided for the worship of God in different iconographic forms according to the taste and predilection of the devotees. The term *ālekhyaśesha* is of frequent occurrence in literature as a euphemistic way of expressing the passing away of a person.

|| THE TEMPLE ||

But these regular temples were quite different from the shrines for ancestors. They were quite numerous and studded the country everywhere. The mental equipment and approach towards the concept of God is clearly revealed, not only in the philosophical disquisitions of great seers, but also in the innumerable iconographic forms developed for presenting the myriad great qualities of the Almighty. The temple was and has always been a great gallery for the glory of God, to present His Mercy and Love in tangible form, in sculpture and paint on the walls, on the pillars, on the plinth, on the roof-line, on the window, on the doorway, on the tower, on the ceiling, on every inch of space that the structure could admit.

Probably there is no other institution in India that can be compared to the temple for the many-sided activities bearing on the life of the people of the village around it. The deep impress of its cultural influence, is matched only by its capacity to invite special intercourse, economic utility, moral uplift on the physical and mental plane. The temple was not merely a place of religious worship, it was a great treasure-house of art in all its aspects. It was the place where the villagers could meet and each one personally feel, indeed benefited by such contacts as would promote a more joyous mode of life, a greater comradeship, more civic sense of discipline and regulated method in the daily run of worldly transactions. The utility of a temple as an institution should be considered from several aspects. The temple as an institution has had an abiding influence on the people all over India. But today this spirit of the temple in its pristine glory, though almost faded everywhere, is still partially kept up in the more conservative nooks in South India, and we can take the typical South Indian temple as a model institution as it has been through centuries also elsewhere in India.

Religious : Religion has played a great part indeed in what man considers his civilized existence. Finer and nobler thoughts and sentiment, a spirit of sacrifice, avoidance of pain to others, realisation of limitations of human capacity, surrender to a higher power, love, mercy, patience, devotion are all chastening influences that have their origin in the spirit of religion. Great efforts in all walks of life have been sustained by religious fervour as we know from history. Every craftsman that added his little bit to a church or cathedral in mediaeval Europe was intensely conscious of his religious duty and gave the best that he could. In India similarly the best in man was always manifested when religion demanded it. If Rājendra Choḷa covered himself with glory by his extensive conquests, it was not so much for personal renown, as for fulfilling his pious desire to emulate Bhagīratha, in his quest for the holy water of the heavenly Ganges, which was the only tribute he demanded of the rulers he vanquished in the Gangetic region, and with which he filled the huge tank, to raise a liquid pillar of victory, beside the colossal temple for Śiva, that he erected in his new capital named *Gaṅgaīkoṇḍachoḷapuram*, commemorating the great event of his bringing home the water of the sacred river. This great artistic offering of the mighty emperor was surely a fitting culmination of his intense piety fostered by association with his father Rājarāja and great grand-aunt Queen Śambianmādevī, both great temple builders. The former was the creator of the magnificent temple at Tañjāvūr for Śiva, named after the

Emperor himself, *Rājarājeśvara;* the latter, widowed early in life, had no greater interest in life than that of serving God and humanity by benefactions, endowments and raising of temples and towers. Every mason, every sculptor that contributed to the raising of any religious edifice was conscious of his duty to religion. The piper, drummer, the garland-maker had all their own fervour in this duty to religion.

The Hindu concept of life is itself based on right conduct; every act from birth onwards till death, every daily duty, starting with awaking from the bed and of putting oneself in it again in the night, was conceived as part of one's own *dharma.* Even when the twig for cleaning the teeth was cut it was done with apologies to the tree which was thereby injured or hurt. Care in the matter of pollution of water in a public tank or river or stream, a matter of civic conscience, was observed as part of religious duty. Feeding birds and animals and entertaining guests and strangers was similarly considered another sacred duty. Early rising and going to bed was itself observed in accordance with these principles. In such a life of the villagers and townsfolk the temple was indeed something more than a symbol of religious being and existence. In fact an old Tamil proverb by that wise old lady Avvaiyār forbids residence in a village without a temple. A daily visit to the temple contributed in no small measure to the spiritual uplift and elevation of the soul, as one was to prepare oneself pure, physically and mentally, before approaching the presence of the Almighty. Religion and religious feeling brought out the best in every individual for the benefit of the society in that common centre of purity, culture and art, the temple.

The ugly side of man was to a certain extent mitigated in life in general and totally put aside at least for the time that the presence of the deity in the temple was intensely felt. There was here the opportunity to reflect on one's weaknesses and lapses and it aided the resolve to lead a life worthy of visiting such sacred precincts.

Many inscriptions describe the endowments made to the temple. Unparalleled liberality could be practised in the name of religion. Here there could be no stinting. No doubt, musicians, dancers, carvers, painters, garland-makers and other repositories of their respective arts were provided by the kings with grants of land for hereditary enjoyment but it was not for this that they gave the best of their arts. It was rather due to their feeling that they were serving God in giving their best; and the cultural standard so set up raised and fostered the appreciative sense of the entire population that composed the audience. Moral ideas and the proper spirit of well-being, thoughts of life in this world and

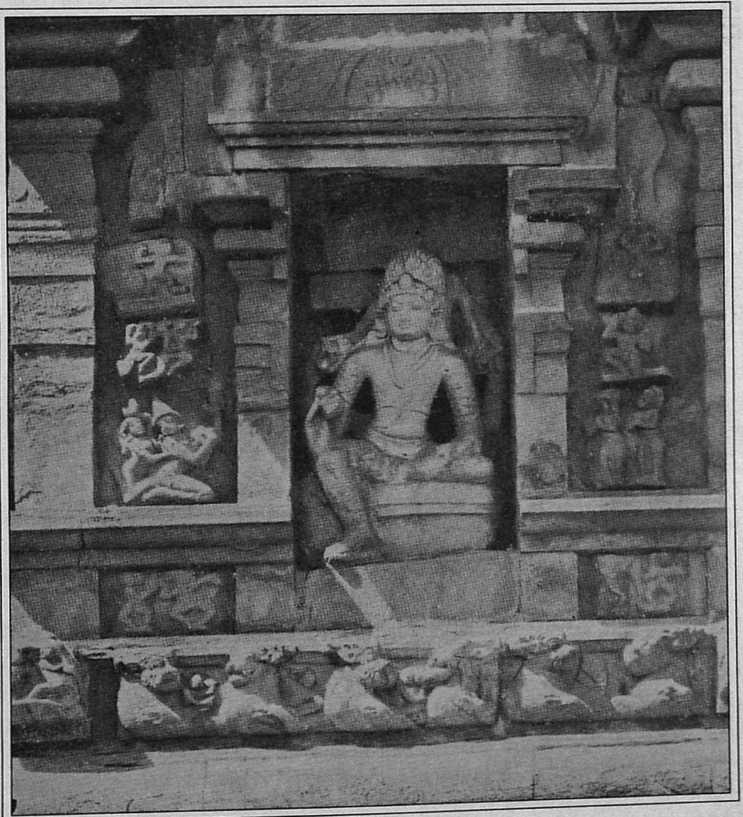


Fig. 111. Madanāntaka, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Gaṅgaikoṇḍachoḷapuram, South India.

hereafter, were inculcated in the minds of the villagers by the provision that the king made, as we learn from inscriptions, for the daily reciting of important portions from the epics, and their exposition in the popular language, for the benefit of the population of the hamlet, assembled every evening in the large pillared halls of the temple, erected for the purpose.

The carvings in the temple illustrating different aspects of the deity, as for instance Śiva as *Sukhāsana* sitting at ease, *Gaṅgādhara* carrying *Gaṅgā* in his locks, *Chandraśekhara* wearing the moon as his crest jewel, *Dakshiṇāmūrti* teaching the wisest Ṛishis the loftiest wisdom, *Kālāntaka* attacking Death, *Madanāntaka* destroying the God of Love, Vishṇu as *Varadarāja* conferring boons, *Śeshaśāyī* and *Vaikuṇṭhanātha* lying and seated respectively on a serpent couch, *Śrīnivāsa* abode of the goddess of Prosperity, *Varāha* the boar rescuing the earth from the ocean, *Narasiṁha* punishing Hiraṇyakaśipu, *Trivikrama* measuring the three worlds, Devī as *Pārvatī*, in her benign attitude, and *Kālī* or *Durgā* in her angry mood, and similarly scores of other forms in different aspects, apart from their iconographic value are intended to convey to the visitor of the temple some of the adorable qualities of the deity conceived in each one of these aspects and serving as a lesson in the daily life of the devotee. Thus *Gaṅgādhara* is not just the God trying to appease his other consort Pārvatī but is the God symbolising the very essence of purity by wearing the stream of Gaṅgā on his locks (Fig. 18). *Chandraśekhara* wears the moon, symbol of growing knowledge and light. *Kālāntaka*, overcoming death, symbolises the fulfilment of the eternal desire of the mortal to be immortal. *Dakshiṇāmūrti* young in age, preaching to old sages under the banyan tree, in a language of silence, suggests that wisdom has no age, brevity is golden and the simplest open air school is the most natural for developing some of the latent higher intellectual powers (Fig. 37). *Madanāntaka* represents the highest *yogic* aspect that overcomes lust (Fig. 111) and probably *Ardhanārīśvara*, half Śiva and half Devī, suggests a unique conception of the closely knit ideal of man and woman rising above the craving of the flesh and serving as the symbol of hospitality and parenthood (Fig. 112). *Varadarāja* stands for all that is noble in munificence. *Śeshaśāyi* connotes that the slumber of the Lord is on a serpent couch of unending coils representing eternity and the ambrosial nature of God in whose presence no poison as such can exist (Fig. 57). *Śrīnivāsa* symbolises all that is lucky, happy and gay, reassuring bright prosperity to all the world, which is just what is prayed of God everyday by every Hindu in his daily prayer for the happiness of every one— *svasti prajābhyaḥ*. Apart from these, many scenes carved in the temple

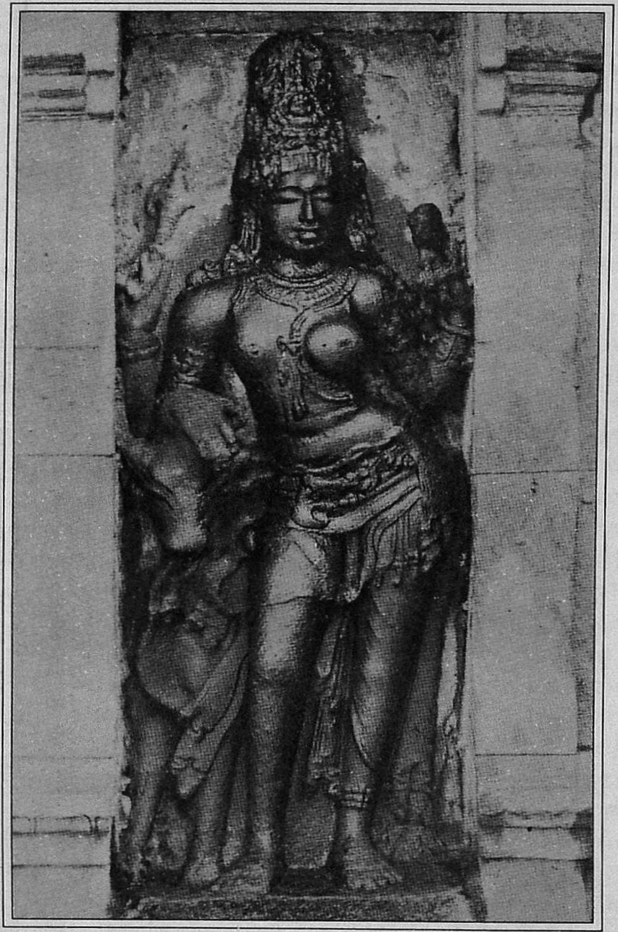


Fig. 112. Ardhanārīśvara, Choḷa, 9th century A.D., South India.

illustrate stories from the epics and the lives of saints, for the moral uplift and edification of the villagers visiting the shrines. This visual education in the moral sphere made such a deep impress that this served more than any other missionary activity for strengthening the resolve of people to lead a good life.

Social : The temple was the seat of great social intercourse. It was here that all the villagers, high and low, could meet in an atmosphere of great friendliness for a common purpose. Here the whole village felt as one man and one family and in any celebration of a joyous domestic festivity the temple formed the venue as for instance in a marriage, when the bridegroom was welcomed by the bride's father, the whole village participating wholeheartedly in the function which was generally in the temple in one of the pillared halls. Similarly the beginning of the new year in the month of *Chaitra* in April was celebrated by the whole village in the temple, where the new year calendar was read out, and the prospects of the year calculated, according to the position of the planets, astronomically explained by the *Nāḷolai* (lit. date announcer, temple astrologer). This announcement of the year, month, fortnight, day and star, *paksha, tithi, vāra* and *nakshatra* by the *Nāḷolai,* who was attached to the temple and provided a small gift of land by common consent for his daily duty, served all the purposes in those days that a calendar does today. We can easily understand the great utility of this procedure in days when printing machines and copies of calendars were unknown.

The festivals in the temples were again for bringing together all the people of the village, and also those from neighbouring villages, for spending happy hours in the pleasantest of moods, young and old joining on such occasions of mirth, in making the functions as pleasant socially, as economically and culturally, in addition to their religious import. Here every craftsman, every toy-maker, picture showman and performer of shadow plays and puppet-showman could exhibit his wares with profit and appreciation. Here the vendors from neighbouring villages could bring and sell with advantage commodities not easily available locally. In fact, the temple festivals attracted the largest fairs in villages where the local fairs, usually weekly, could only supply the bare needs for routine life.

It was the temple that provided free entertainment for the people in the village and kept them happy. It was the duty of the state to provide entertainment for the subjects, and we have many instances of inscriptions mentioning such entertainments, called *Samājas.* Aśoka himself mentions *Samājas* in his edicts. Khāravela of Orissa mentions in his Hāthigumpha inscription, how he kept his subjects very happy by providing free entertainment through music, dance, drama and recitals. The South Indian temple organised this entertainment in the most effective manner and indeed promoted the appreciative capacity of the audience in cultural subjects. The pipers, drummers, lute-players, flutists, musicians, choir-singers and the danseuses, with their musical accompaniments, that offered the choicest flowers of their arts for the deity every evening in the *Nāṭya* and *Saṅgīta-maṇḍāpas,* pillared halls for dance and music (Figs. 113 and 114), also entertained an appreciative audience of young and old, all from the village. They created an atmosphere of furthering the cause of fine art by educating in a very easy and natural inexpensive manner one and all in the village by sheer constant listening to sweet notes and soft melodies of music and watching of the graceful bodily movements in dance, a study of which was further fostered and aided by the numerous representations of the different *sthānas, karaṇas,* and *aṅgahāras* of *Nāṭya* or dance pictured in panels with labels incised underneath them. It is interesting to find that such dance poses in carved panels in South Indian temples, as at Chidaṁbaram (Fig. 115) and Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, have similar counterparts in far-off Java where the Prambanan temple of Śiva shows beautiful panels illustrating the dance poses enumerated by Bharata; and we know the tremendous influence of the South Indian temple, its architecture, sculpture and

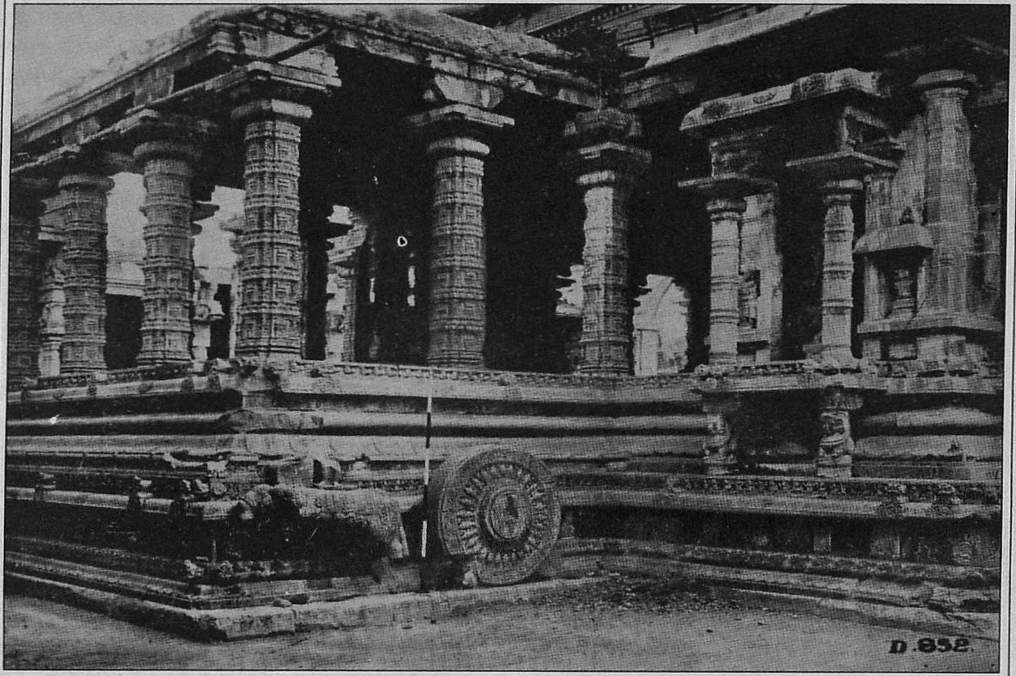


Fig. 113. Nāṭyamaṇḍapa, Choḷa, 12th century A.D., Dārāsuram, South India.

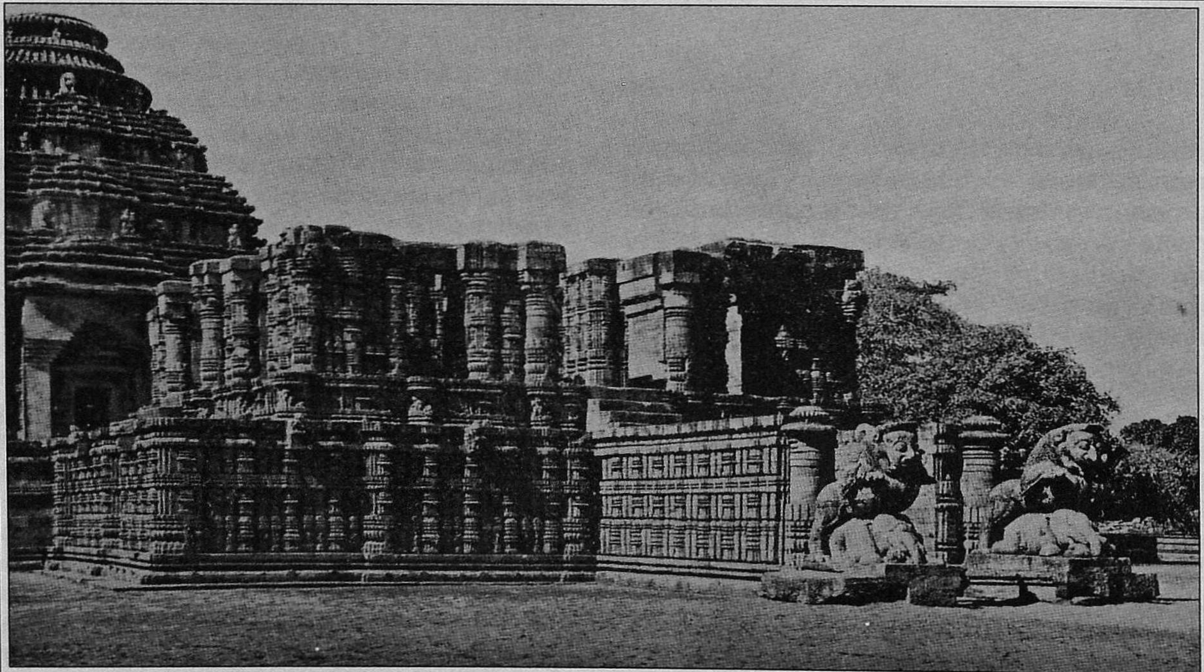


Fig. 114. Nāṭmandir, Eastern Gaṅgā, 13th century A.D., Koṇārak, Orissa

Fig. 115. Dance Karaṇa panels on the Gopuram, Choḷa, 13th century A.D., Chidaṁbaram, South India.

script in this distant island.

It is not every village that is fortunately situated on the banks of a river, and even if situated it was not always that one could run up to the river for the daily bath. The temple being more closely situated, the huge tank beside the temple (Fig. 116), which was an invariable feature, provided for refreshing the villager with a bath as often as he liked, and specially brought him under the discipline of a pure body, promoting purity of spirit in the presence of the deity, the visit of whose shrine demanded a bath. The temple tank or well, generally a special one from which water was carried for bathing the principal deity, was utilised by the whole village for carrying home sufficient supply of sweet crystal clear water in such places as lacked this convenience in each individual home.

The temple was the tower clock for the village (Fig. 117) in days when no time-piece was in vogue. For every *yāmā* there were particular acts of ritual connected with the worship of the deity and people could by the music and din in the temple understand the time of the day or night, apart from the usual knowledge of it by watching the course of the sun, moon and stars.

Another great social benefit was that the education of the village was looked after by the temple. The daily exposition of the texts of Anuśāsana or Śānti-parva or a similar portion from the epics like the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* was listened to attentively by a concourse gathered in the *Vyākhyāna maṇḍapa* pillard hall, for discourses in the temple, provided an easy, noble and magnificent, adult education. Maybe this may not have provided for an understanding of the alphabet, but it really provided for the highest knowledge of both worldly and religious affairs. Some of the larger temples arranged for regular courses of study and served as colleges. We learn that there was provision made for teaching of various branches of study in Philosophy, Rhetoric, Logic, Grammar, Political Science, Dharma-śāstra, besides the provision for the teaching of the three principal *Vedas, Ṛig, Yajus* and *Sāma* (Fig. 118), and for training in a course of the ritual and *Āgama* pertaining to temple construction, maintenance and worship, as also a study of

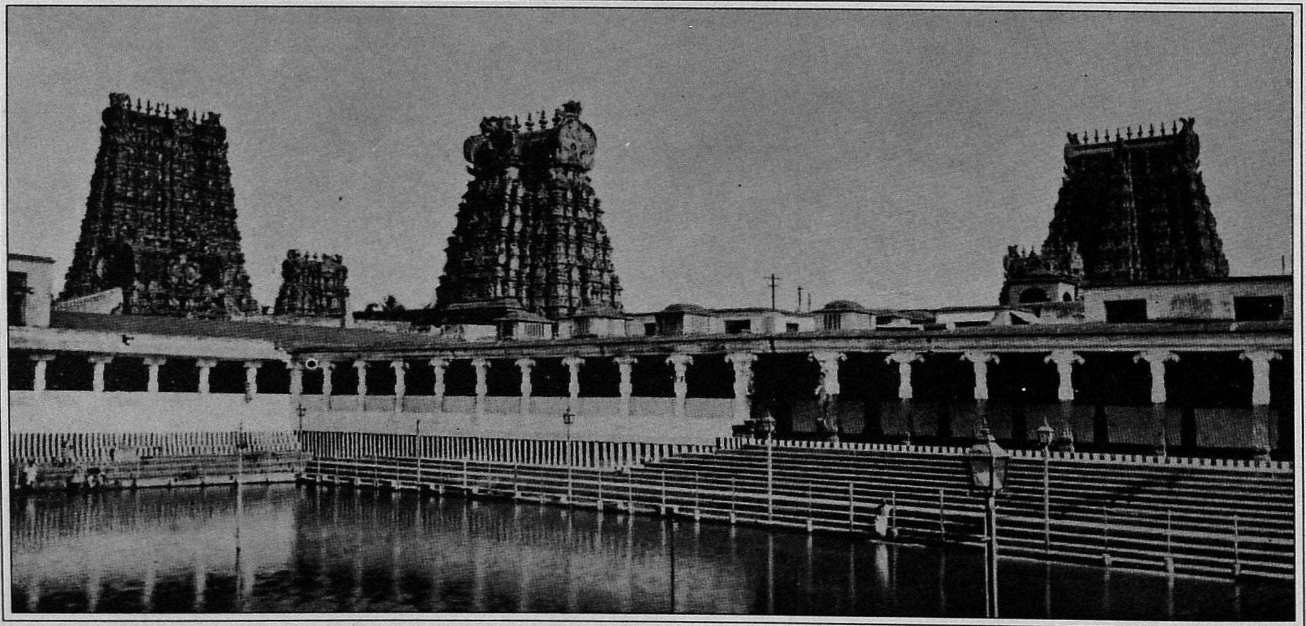


Fig. 116. Pushkaraṇī tank and temple, Nāyak, 17th century A.D., Madurai, South India.

Fig. 117. Gopuras of temple, Choḷa, 13th century A.D., Chidaṁbaram, South India.

hymnal literature in the popular language, both Śaivite and Vaishṇavite, *Devāram* and *Tiruvāimoḷi*. In larger centres like Kāñchī the *Ghaṭikā* or the University existed closely linked with the temple. The temple provided for feeding and clothing students and maintaining the teachers. The rations, provision of medicine and medical attendance for the students and other amenities for their general welfare are also mentioned in inscriptions in the temples.

The keen interest that the temple evinced in the general welfare and happiness of the villagers is clearly borne out by the fact that even maternity hospitals were maintained by some temples. Even the number of beds is given.

In times of famine, hard-striken villagers were fed and grain doled out from the temple granaries where abundant corn was stocked for such contingencies. Relief work of this nature, as we see today, was co-existent with the instinct of mercy of man and especially the god-fearing, and the temple formed the most noteworthy institution for providing relief.

Society in the village so loved the temple as an institution for the common benefit of the villagers, that when punishments were meted out by the village assembly, constituted of five wise men, the fine imposed was ordered to be made over to the temple for burning a lamp or similar purpose. To keep a lamp burning, ghee had to be provided, and cows or sheep were purchased and maintained for the purpose. This naturally increased the wealth of cattle in the

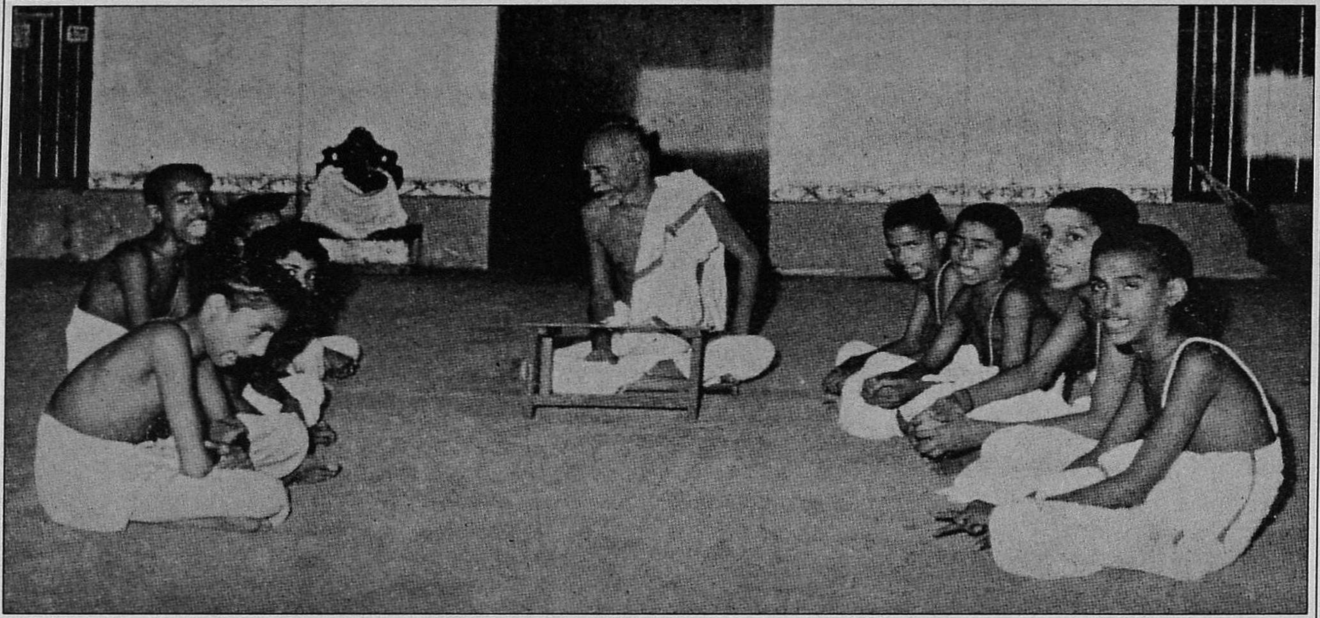


Fig. 118. Adhyayana (study) of Vedas in temple, South India.

village and helped the well-being of cowherds who formed an important element of rural agricultural India.

We know from inscriptions that the members of the village and town assemblies, which were the governing bodies, were elected by the vote of the people. The vote by ballot was an ancient institution in India as we know from the Uttaramallur inscriptions. This democratic institution was essentially based on *Dhārmic* principles as may be seen by the qualifications prescribed for membership and vote and candidature, the procedure in conducting the elections and so forth. At the village assembly hall, in the vicinity of the temple, was announced the decision of the result of elections, as all the pots with slits in their mouth covers for dropping the cards of palmyra leaf with the name of the candidate incised by the voter, were brought from their different areas forming the poll booths in the village, and all the cards emptied into a large pot kept for the purpose in the assembly hall, where, in the vicinity of the deity, the examination of the results of the voting was conducted by elderly people of the highest character, including temple representatives. It is indeed interesting that, though election was by vote, divine aid was called for deciding the final stage of the election, by calling in an innocent little boy, to pick at random a card from the whole lot, giving the names of the candidates agreeable to the villagers.

In times of danger, when there was any attack, the temple with its elaborate, high and strongly built boundary wall, served as a fortress to shelter the entire village and the large Gopura towers served as strongholds and watch towers (Figs. 117, 119). Normally the lights in the tiers of the temple towers pointed the location of the village to weary nocturnal travellers who may have lost their way, serving in the same way on land as a light-house for sea-farers during nights.

The visit to the temple being an essential factor in Hindu life, pilgrimages were greatly in vogue. Hospitality being a national trait in India, every village with a large temple arranged for rest-houses for pilgrims visiting the temple, and the needs of the less fortunately placed in society were looked after by those more affluent.

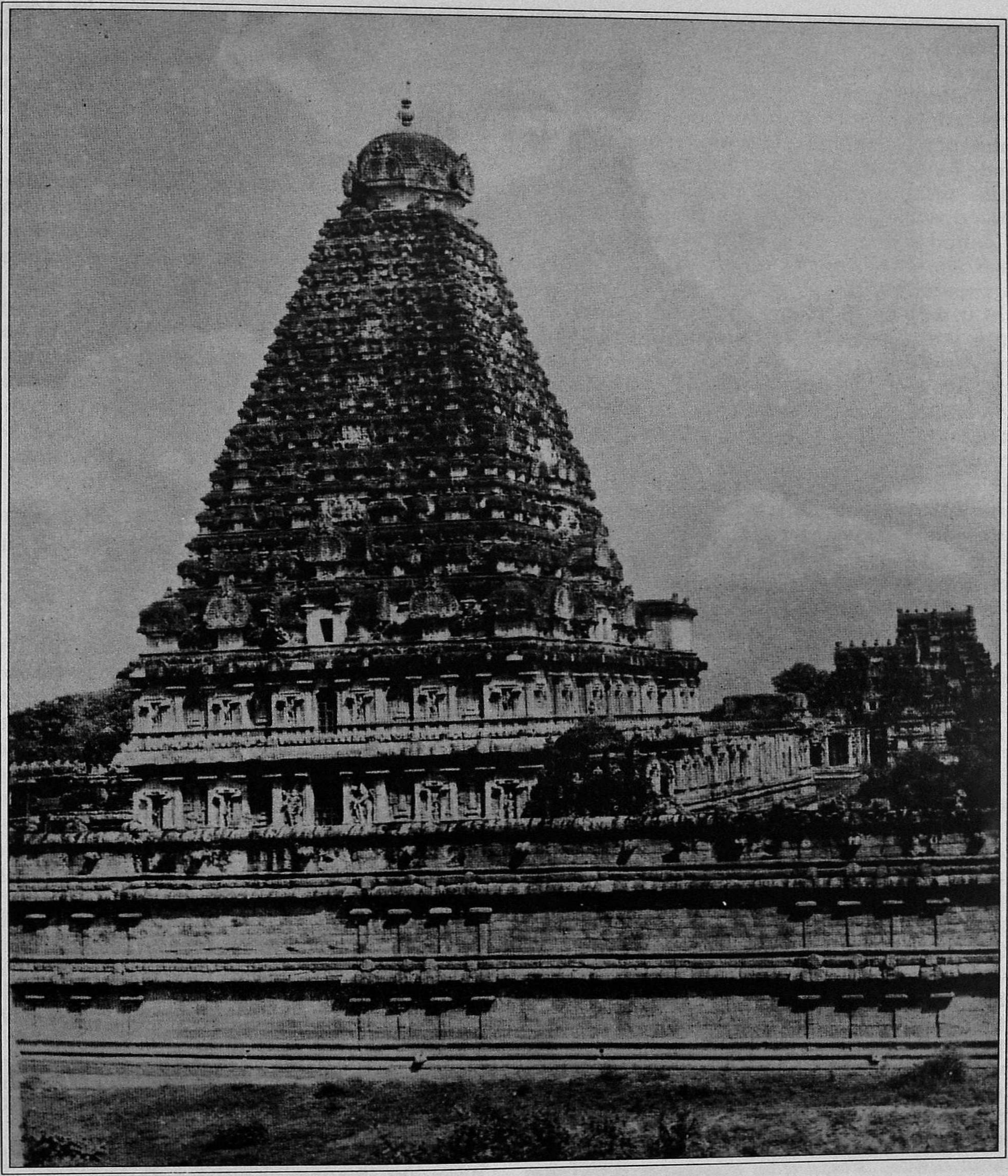


Fig. 119. Vimāna of Rājarājeśvara temple, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Tañjāvūr, South India.

Economic : The temple was a great sustaining factor in the village. It provided a means of living for a large number of families and fostered many arts and crafts. An examination of inscriptions would reveal the number of men engaged in temple service, their varied functions and their equipment. The temple priest, versed in the *Āgama* ritual, followed what was known as *Bhāṭṭavṛitti* and was called a *Bhaṭṭachāryya* or *Śaivāchārya* or *Śiva-Brāhmaṇa*. The manager of the temple, who supervised all its affairs, was known as *Devakarmi*. As the *bhoga* and *prasāda* in the temple was intended to be distributed after every *yāmā* worship, there were cooks working in the *Maḍappaḷḷi*, the temple kitchen. There were various endowments in the temple for the feeding of pilgrims, *Brahmachārins* and *Brahmins*. There is mention of the number of *yogis, yogīśvaras* and *Bhairavas*, all ascetics fed and maintained by the temple. To help the priest in the sanctum there was a water-carrier to bring fresh water from the tank to bathe the deity. There were gardeners to look after the temple garden, and garland-makers, who gathered flowers and provided garlands for daily worship. There were weavers for the supply of fresh cloth for the deity. Potters in the service of the temple supplied utensils for cooking the offering for the deity. There was also the washerman to give his share of service. There were watchmen to safe-guard the temple. There were carpenters for the temple, to attend to wood-work, and the repairs of the temple car, the palanquin (Fig. 120), the *Vāhanas* (large wooden figures for supporting the processional deity during festivals). In the service of the temple were a number of musicians, like drummers, pipers, flutists, lute-players, for sounding hand bells or cymbals, conch-blowers, and for sounding the *Karaḍigai*. A dance master was attached to the temple and arrangements were made for musical accompaniments for the daily dance in the evening for which a number of dancing girls were attached to the temple. For the daily recital of the *Veda* and the singing of hymns like *Devāram, Tiruvāimoḷi, Tiruppaḷḷāṇḍu, Tiruvembāvai,* there was adequate provision made. *Devāram, Tiruvāchakam* and *Nālāyiraprabandham* are hymns in Tamil by *Śaivite* and *Vaishṇavite* saints. The temple maintained teachers and students for the study of different branches of knowledge. As a temple was in charge of other charitable institutions attached to it, the proper looking after the feeding and maintenance of certain *Maṭhas* also devolved on it. All this makes it very clear that the temple provided permanent employment for a good number of people from the village who looked to this institution for their maintenance. Apart from this several skilled craftsmen, like stone-masons, chariot-makers, wood-carvers, painters, *sthapatis* or metal-workers, jewellers among many others, found occupation whenever there was *tiruppaṇi* or temple-repairs, renewals, constructions of additions, when a temple car was renewed or remodelled, when the walls or ceiling were repainted with scenes from the epics and other religious lore.

In the case of many temples whole villages were given as *Devadāna*, gifts to the temple. As the king usually gave them tax-free, all such income being the privilege of the temple, the temples had to collect all the taxes and perquisites due from those lands. This meant that the revenue of the village had to be looked after by the temple. But this also meant the responsibility to look after the irrigation tanks, the water sluices and channels, the planting of trees useful and fruit-bearing, like coconut, mango and jack in garden lands, for proper upkeep of groves and cultivation of sweet-smelling flower-plants and shrubs, like *maruvu, damanaka, iruveli, śenbagam* and *seṅgaḷuṇīr,* digging of big wells, providing mills for pressing oil and protecting coconut and palmyra trees by forbidding toddy-tapping. These responsibilities, which were usually borne by the state, devolved on the temple committee which had to look after the prosperity and well-being of the village.

The temple was the busiest centre in the village, as from the early hours of the morning till late in the night, there were a number of persons coming to transact business in the temple, apart from the regular pilgrims and devotees. There were shepherds who came with the required

Fig. 120. Temple festival, deity in palanquin, Tiruvārur, South India.

quantity of ghee at the appointed time daily for the lamps, provision for the lighting of which was made by many endowments for the maintenance of cows or sheep for regular supply of ghee. The temple granaries were filled with grain and accounts rendered by those in charge of cultivation. As there were similar endowments for special *abhishekas* (baths for the deities), *archanās* (worship with flowers), and offerings at specified times in the day, there was a regular supply of sweet-smelling unguents, sandal paste, saffron, incense, camphor, musk, rosewater, garlands, fruit, vegetables, specially cleaned rice and other requirements according to specification in the endowment. Similarly there were other endowments involving charge of money, land and livestock which had to be properly maintained and looked after. All these meant the business transaction of the temple.

The building of the temple itself was generally exempt from land assessment, as among the lands in the village indispensible for the life and growth of the people and for their common benefit the temple ranked foremost.

Fig. 121. Dances in temple, South India.

The *Śrī Koil*, or sacred temple *tirumuṟṟam* or temple courtyard, *nandavanam* or flower garden attached to the temple, *Devar tirumañjanakkuḷam*, or the bathing tank for the deity were, like the grazing ground, water courses and roads, exempt from land assessment.

Cultural : The temple was the centre of culture in the village. It is here that architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dance and literature, as well as the folk arts and crafts, received the greatest encouragement. The best musicians in the village, or sometimes a master-musician, renowned in the kingdom, when he visited any one of the shrines, gave the very best of their art as an offering to the deity and the *Sangīta-maṇḍapa* had an audience from the village quite appreciative, enjoying the entertainment without any cost. The inscriptions mention a number of musical instruments like *Karaḍigai, Segandi, Uḍakkai, Yāḷ, Vīṇai, Kālam, Kaimaṇi, Mattalam, Parai* and *Śaṅgu* many of which have almost ceased to exist, having long gone out of use. The *Yāḷ* was a lovely stringed instrument corresponding to the harp-typed *Vīṇā* which existed in India till nearly a thousand years ago but which is still in vogue in Burma. The *Kuḍamuḷā* is a pot-shaped drum, provided sometimes with more than one mouth, and called *Pañchamukha-vādyam*, when having five. It was in vogue in some of the large ancient temples as at Tiruvārūr a few generations ago. The flute, lute, different kinds of cymbals and drum were used for accompaniments to the daily singing of *Devāram* and other devotional songs in the hall for music. In the *Nāṭyamaṇḍapa* hall of dance, the danseuses of the temple regularly conducted the dance in the evening, as part of temple ritual. These women were repositories of the science of the language of gesture and artistic bodily movement according to the dance traditions of Bharata as expounded in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Fig. 121). Śiva in one of his important aspects was called *Āḍavallān*, proficient in dance and *Naṭarāja*, the lord of dance, and the Chidaṁbaram temple contains the famous hall called *Kanaka-sabhā*, the golden hall magnificently decorated with gold plating by Choḷa kings. It may here be remembered that the Choḷa monarchs were great devotees of Śiva and patrons of the art of dance, so often a theme in sculpture and painting (Figs. 122, 123 and 124). An inscription records the great appreciation of the dance performance by a dancing girl at Tiruvottiyūr and the king's gift of land for this temple dancer. The form of Naṭarāja, the supreme dancer, was a great favourite of the Choḷa kings. The temple towers at Chidaṁbaram were completely decorated with panels representing all these *sthānas, karaṇas* and *angahāras* as enumerated by Bharata. This great period, when the different arts flourished under the patronage of the Choḷas, shows the high appreciation and popularity of dance effectively suggested in such names of *Vaḷanāḍus* or districts as *Nṛitta-vinoda-vaḷanāḍu*, district of dance amusement. Even a measure was named after the deity *Āḍavallān.* A bronze representation of Naṭarāja is an invariable feature in all temples. Even during processions the processional deity was sometimes moved and tossed in certain fashion to suggest some form of dance of some local importance like *Ajapā-naṭana* in the Tiruvārūr temple. Just as Vīṇādharadakshiṇāmūrti was the lord of music, Naṭarāja was the lord of dance and the *Nāṭya-maṇḍapa* of every temple glorified the dance of Śiva by the dance performance which was included in the daily ritual.

Drama was also fostered in the temple, as for instance the *Kuravañjināṭakam* in the Bṛihadīśvara temple today, which is a survival of the famous *Rājarājeśvara-charita* drama enacted in the presence of Rājendra Choḷa. Many such *nāṭakas* enacted in the temples are known to us. Apart from this there were entertainments of similar nature during the annual festivals when large concourses of people from neighbouring villages and towns flocked for witnessing these celebrations.

The greatest art treasures of India are from temples. Exquisite sculptures and carvings, mostly as embellishments of architectural parts of the temple, and also, individual sculptures intended to go in cells and niches for worship,

Fig. 122. Music and dance scene from mural, Choḷa, 11th century, A.D., Tañjāvūr, South India.

lovely metal images of varying size intended for processional purposes during festivities in the temple, vehicles for these bronzes, quite large-sized and made of wood and gaily coloured or covered with silver plate, temple cars on elaborate scale with massive wheels and rich carving, all of wood, were also prepared by craftsmen who were very clever in their line of work. If Rodin considers the Tiruvālaṅgāḍu bronze of *Nāṭarāja*, now in the Madras Museum, a masterpiece and the finest representation of rhythmic movement in the world, it is clearly apparent that this and similar images, which number legion, were fashioned by master craftsmen. The long inscription in the Bṛihadīśvara temple at Tañjāvūr mentions in detail the large number of images in bronze presented by the emperor to the temple. Some of them may still be seen and are rare specimens of art. Such royal favour and also that of other nobles and wealthy people fostered the art and every temple generally speaking is a miniature museum in itself. The *Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa* of the Vellore temple is still a wonder of artistic perfection (Fig. 125). The rearing horses in stone, with the chains of the reins delicately carved allowing the links to move, show that the Vijayanagara monarchs could discern and select the best craftsmen for their work. Painting the temple walls and ceiling was a feature quite usual. The great masterpieces discovered in the various cave and structural temples of South India, as at Sittannavāśal, the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchīpuram, the Bṛihadīśvara temple at Tañjāvūr (Figs. 122 and 123), Tirunandikkarai in Travancore, Tiruvañjikulam in Cochin, in the Bādāmī caves, in the Kailāsa temple at Ellora, in the ruined temples at Hampi, in Tādpatri and in the temple of Lepākshī and at other places, are all examples

Fig. 123. Dance scene from mural, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Tañjāvūr, South India.

in colour from the brush of artists now unknown, but masters of great renown in their own day, and patronised by the kings who took great interest in fostering the different branches of fine art.

Even the temple utensils and articles of worship, the lamps, the incense burners, the bathing pedestals for the deity, the chests and boxes for keeping valuables, the insignia of office of the different watchmen, were all beautifully fashioned with artistic designs worked on them. Whether it was a rose water sprinkler, a bell, a spouted vessel or a brass conch for pouring water, a plate for offering betel leaves, it was always a thing of beauty. The handle of the *chaurī* used for ceremonial purposes, the general make up of the umbrella for shading the processional deity, were highly artistic. The wealth of jewellery in the temple intended for the deity was staggering indeed. In short, everything in the temple suggested deep appreciation and fostering of arts and crafts.

Health : The purity of the sanctum sanctorum in the temple demanded physical and mental purity of those who visited it. The tank in the vicinity of the temple or sometimes the river flowing close by, made it an essential duty of the visitor to have a dip in it. Every care was taken to see that the water was not polluted and this fostered a civic sense. A visit to the temple also

Fig. 124. Hallīsalāsya dance, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Bagh Cave, Central India.

meant wearing fresh clean clothes after the bath.

Apart from this general sense of cleanliness the temple activity took care of the health of the villagers as we gather from many inscriptions. Many temples maintained hospitals. The number of beds, provision for nurses, stocking of medicines, maintaining of doctors are all given. There is sometimes a mention of a maternity hospital, as in a Kākatīya inscription from Malkāpuram. The temples, which happened to be the centres of learning and maintained colleges, also looked after the general health and well-being of the students, and we have inscriptions mentioning the normally required medicines stocked and the quantity of each. The deity itself in some places was conceived as a physician, as for instance Śiva at Vaidīśvarankoil called Vaidyanātha. In such places pilgrims flocked with a faith in the curative powers of the local deity. It is just possible that some tanks were provided by nature with water, having healing qualities, mineral springs and the like. The *pradakshiṇa* or the pious walk around the hill, as at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai and Tirukkaḷukuṇram, where the hill itself was considered sacred, the atmosphere charged with the odour of healing herbs growing in the mountain, specially the potent *Sañjīvi,* yet baffling correct identification, is supposed to speed the recovery of patients.

Agricultural and crafts : The village is the unit, of which, the structure, if properly understood, provides knowledge of agricultural India. As it is nearly so even today, every village in India is a self-contained unit, and in ancient times the village functioned almost as one family. It was mainly agriculture that sustained

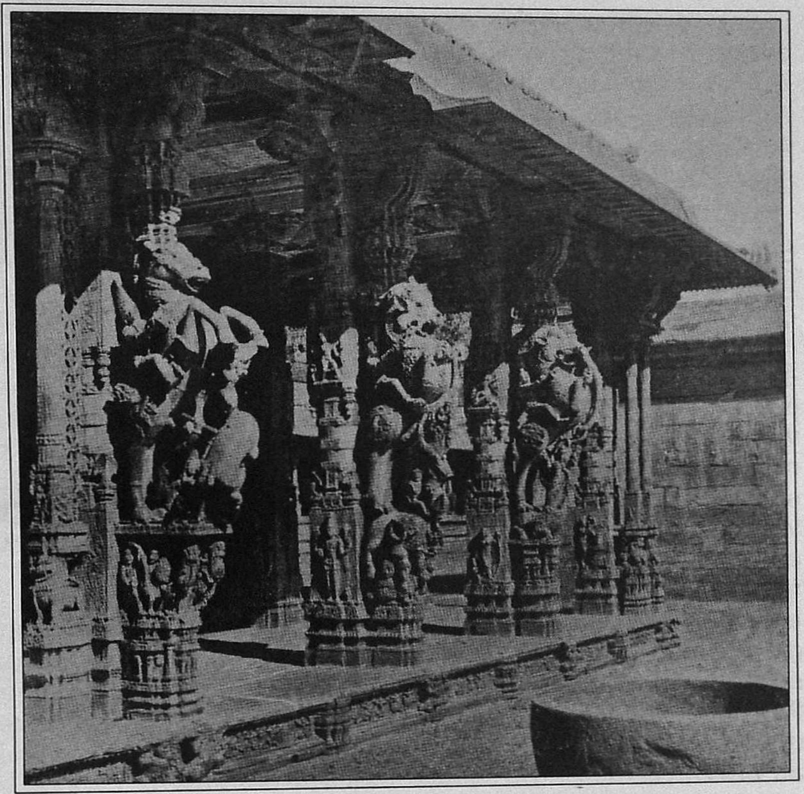


Fig. 125. Kalyāṇamaṇḍapa, Vijayanagar, 16th century A.D, Vellore, South India.

the people of the village. Most things were reckoned for purchase in terms of cattle and grain. Such words as *Yavakrīta*, purchased for an amount of barley, *Aśvakrīta*, purchased in exchange for a horse, are indicative of the simple transactions of the villagers. The village carpenter, potter, washerman, watchman, astrologer, barber, doctor, priest and several others were paid in kind, i.e. in grain for their services, intended for the common good of everyone in the village. Even today such things as are required for the simple daily use of the villagers are purchased by giving small doles of grain or corn. In agricultural rural India, the temple played a very important part in the simple life of the villagers. Quite a large number of acres belonged to the temple itself or the temple committees managed land on behalf of some endowment or other. Similarly, groves and orchards with fruit-bearing trees and flower gardens belonging to the temple, which were exempt from assessment, were always bright and enhanced the cheerful appearance of the village. Every gathering of harvest was attended with festivals and mirthmaking in the village, in which the temple played the most important part, as such festivity centred around the deity of the temple. The village itself was so planned that the temple was located in the centre with the tank beside it, and streets running all around on all the four sides in different rows, the temple priests and Brahmins being located in the first streets nearest the temple, the merchants, artisans and craftsmen next, and the agriculturists beyond that, as close as possible to the fields which actively engaged their attention. Whenever the temple possessed the whole village as *Devadāna,* the looking after the water channels, sluices, tanks, revenue collections and so forth devolved on the temple itself. The responsibility of keeping the villagers happy after their day's hard work in the fields was cheerfully taken up by the temple, and the dance and music recitals really served a very useful purpose. The temple festivals gave an impetus for the development of crafts, as every craftsman, or the guilds, composed of craftsmen, turned out their best, the weaver on his loom, the potter on his wheel, the wood-carver with his chisel, the metal-worker from his mould, the toy-maker, the leather-worker, the perfumer, everyone giving his best to make the fairs in the festivals remarkable ones, advantageous to the producer and the consumer. As already pointed out, many craftsmen were utilised for the services in the temple and the crafts fostered. The temple in a way set a fashion, even as some of the fine designs, in architecture and sculpture in the temple, served as models for the patterns of

jewels manufactured by the local goldsmiths. In every way, the temple looked after and assured a prosperous and happy village with a high cultural sense, simple agricultural, rural outlook, elevated and pious mental plane of thought, neighbourly feeling, civic sense and hospitality.

Unifying factor : The temple was the symbol of the unity and homogeneity of the village. Here all the villagers met for some purpose or the other almost every day and developed one and all spontaneous affection for the others. They could here not only join in the worship and participate in the temple festivals but also welcome and be welcomed in concourses, meeting in the temple for the celebration of some joyous domestic function, like the welcoming of the bridegroom, or an occasion of equal importance to all, like the reading of the first page of the calendar of the new year or the annual ceremony of the first lessons in grammar, philosophy, philology, law, ethics and so forth, which was all in the temple. Besides this the entertainments in music and dance, devotional songs, the exposition from the epics, all attracted the entire village into the temple which, with its other secular transactions, always had a large number of persons making life very busy within its precincts from early morning till midnight.

But apart from this the temple itself was a great institution. It was one of the greatest creations of the Indian genius. It was the hub on which revolved the whole life of the village. The temple provided for the education of the scholar, the amusement of the public, the cultivation of art and aesthetic sense and for the piety of the worshipper. As can be gathered from the inscriptions the temple was at once a great centre of various activities. The great endowments made to temples were not in vain. The sense of responsibility of the committees that managed them was very great and it should be remembered that high character and scholarship were essential for those who were to serve on these committees. The temples were places of great literary activity. In fact classes in various sciences and systems of philosophy, grammar, rhetoric and religious hymns were conducted in temples. Several inscriptions give us a vivid picture of the subjects studied, particulars of the teachers and the taught, as for instance, in inscriptions from *Eṇṇāyiram*, where we have long lists of the various courses of study, the number of teachers and students for whose maintenance provision was made. An excellent scheme of both juvenile and adult education on the noblest lines for imparting right ideas of social life and conduct, right morals, incorruptible ways, sound general knowledge of the affairs of the world, of institutions, political and social, and of economics from a broad view-point, was all arranged by the king through the exposition of special parts of the *Māhabhārata*, the encyclopaedic national epic which has shaped Indian thought and character through the ages.

The temples maintained hospitals. Inscriptions give long lists of medicines stocked and the quantity of each. During times of famine the temples, being rich institutions, dedicated to the service of humanity, undertook the feeding of people on a large scale.

Provision was made in the temples for morning and evening music, the pipers, drummers, flutists and others being given separate land allowances. An inscription mentions the arrangement for the play of a *vīṇā* in the temple. Having myself witnessed in a large but neglected out-of-the-way temple in my district the *abhinaya* performed before the deity, the song being sung and commented on in the language of gesture, according to the canons of Bharata, I can say that it is no exaggeration that either Rājarāja or Rājendra was thrilled when he witnessed a great *Nāṭya* performance in one of the temples.

The inscription does mention in glowing terms the king's high appreciation of this art and his reward for it. The *Nāṭyamaṇḍapa* in the temple was explicitly for this purpose. However prudish social reformers may be on the question of *nautch*, it was a necessary institution in the temple. Similarly drama was fostered and the *Nāṭyamaṇḍapa* in the temple served as an open-air theatre; and we learn from inscriptions of the

drama *Rājarājeśvara Nāṭaka* enacted during the time of Rājendra Choḷa I in such a theatre.

Provision was made for the chant of *Devāram* in Śaivaite temples and the hymns of the Āḷvārs in Vishṇu temples. Similarly arrangements were made for the chant of the *Vedas ; Ṛig, Yajus* and *Sāma*. The temple provided occupation for wood-carvers, sculptors, painters, gardeners, garland-makers, potters, watermen, cooks and accountants, amongst others. The festival conducted at periodic intervals, attracted crowds from distant places (Fig. 120) and fairs contributed to that healthy social intercourse which is a unifying bond between villages and districts. The *rathayātrā*, car festival, was indeed one of the greatest bonds in linking together, even in early times, when social distinctions abounded, in bringing together one and all, high and low, in an enthusiastic service for the Lord, where the peasant and the nobleman, the beggar and the householder, the little boy and the old grandfather could join hands in a common purpose of great importance.

THE BOOK-EMBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE

In India the tradition for study has always been to learn by listening to the *gurus,* who teach everything by word of mouth and education is by listening (*Śruti* and *Śruta*). The ancient mode of studying the Veda is only by repeating what the *guru* utters according to its proper connotation (Fig. 126) and even in the case of the other texts pertaining to various *Śāstras*, this was always the method. The Veda was rightly styled *Śruti*. The forms *Śruti* and *Śṃriti* only connote the word for learning by listening and memorizing without a written book. But it is not as if writing was unknown, because, of the many stages in one's life, the stage of a boy being put to school was one where he had to learn the *lipi*. In the *Lalitavistara* we have a number of *lipis* mentioned as they were learnt by Siddhārtha as a little boy, and it is interesting to find in the earliest sculptures representing Buddha's study, from the Gandhāra area, the boy is shown along with others of his age in the school, with the board in his hand on which he would write. A scholar was known as *Kritākshara*, or *aksharamukha*, one who had learnt the letters, the same as a lettered man in English, as distinguished from the unlettered—*aksharāṇi parīkshyantām ambarādambareṇa kim*. Of course, as we gather from literature, it was not every one who was an adept in the letters and a special class of scribes specialised in beautiful writing. Chāṇakya could very well appreciate the beautiful letters of a scribe by exclaiming *aho darśanīyānnyaksharāṇi-Mudrārākshasa*, being conscious at the same time of the defects of his own writing, which he characterises as the poor specimen of handwriting of a *Śrotriya*-one learned in the Vedic lore and consequently indifferent to this achievement which was more for those who wanted worldy gains.

Fig. 126. "Ṛishi Dīrghatapas teaching disciples, Suṇga, 2nd century B.C., Bhārhut, Central India, Indian Museum.

śrotriyāksharāṇi prayatnalikhitānyapi
niyatam asphuṭāni bhavanti
—Mudrārākshasa.

One of the earliest carvings showing a scribe at work, with a stylus in his hand, scratching lines of text in beautiful letters on a palm-leaf, is probably from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, where astrological calculations regarding prince Siddhārtha's birth are recorded (Fig. 127). In South India the palm-leaf and stylus were greatly favoured, while in North India the *bhūrjapatra* or the birch-bark and pen and ink (*mashī* and *tūlikā*) were used. Daṇḍa the attendant of Sūrya is always shown in mediaeval sculpture with the ink-pot and the pen in his hand. The book itself, which is a symbol of knowledge, is found in the hands of various deities specially associated with learning. Thus Sarasvatī is shown with a book in her hand as the

Fig. 127. Scribe writing,Ikshvāku, 3rd century A.D., Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, South India, National Museum.

Goddess of Learning (Fig. 130). The earliest representation of this deity is in the Lucknow Museum with an inscription on the pedestal of this Kushāṇ carving. She has a book in her hand, which is tied with a string as is usual with all manuscripts. Another example of a deity carrying a book is Brahmā, the deity associated with knowledge, and the spouse of Sarasvatī, in all his representations of all dates. The invariable thing that we find in one of his hands is a sheaf of leaves composing a book. One of the finest examples of Brahmā of this type is from Elephanta, borne aloft by a row of swans (Fig. 129). Śiva, as the Lord presiding over knowledge in his aspect as Dakshiṇāmūrti, is also shown carrying a book similarly (Fig. 36) and in the Naranārāyaṇa aspect of Vishṇu, of which we have a fine early example from Deogarh. Vishṇu is shown carrying a book in his hand as the great teacher (Fig. 37). Even in the case of Buddha, whose great contribution to the world was his *Dharma*, which he expounded at Sārnāth, the hem of his garment is always so shown that it suggests the book held in that hand as an emblem of knowledge. In the case of one of the greatest Śaivaite saints of the South, Manikkavāchaka, it is the manuscript of the *Tiruvāchakam* shown in his hand that easily helps the identification of the figure. One of the finest examples of this type was discovered in the village of Maḍukkūr with the opening verse of *Tiruvāchakam* clearly inscribed on the leaf of the manuscript in the hand in early Choḷa letters of the 12th century (Fig. 131).

As already indicated it is the mastery of the alphabet that enables the student to read advanced books and soar higher in the sphere of his studies. That is why Kālidāsa says

liper yathāvadgrahaṇena vāṅgmayam
nadīmukheneva samudram āviśat
—*Raghuvamśa*, iii, 28.

The mastery of script for reading and understanding texts was like entering the ocean through the rivers. It is interesting in this connection to recall that as in the case of *Varuṇapūjā*, when it is a pot of water, in which Varuṇa, the lord of waters and streams is invoked, the Goddess of Learning is invoked on the *Sarasvatīpūjā* day in a sheaf of manuscripts that suggests her presence.

Books composed of larger and more permanent pages were made available in great universities, as for instance that of Bhoja in Dhārā, Bhojaśālā. This was done by inscribing in beautiful letters, for all time to come, classical works or other very interesting books required for the study of students, on slabs fixed in the walls of the class rooms of the university, so that there could be no difficulty for students at least in the case of these books, and they could easily refresh their memory by just a glance at the walls. It was by pure accident that one such slab, fixed with its letters covered up in the process of using the stone as material for building a mosque, by accidentally falling down and revealing the writing on it, helped the world to know that the drama *Pārijātamañjarī nāṭikā* by Madana (*Epigraph. Ind.*, VIII, p. 96) and two Prakrit poems on the Primeval tortoise *(ibid.*, p. 41) composed by the emperor were written entirely on slabs fixed on the walls of the University. Similar was the case at Ajmer. In Kāñchīpuram a small piece of a pillar showing fragments of verses from the *Sūryaśataka* of Mayūra in Grantha letters of the 11th century A.D., revealed that there should have been a whole set of such pillars in a now derelict

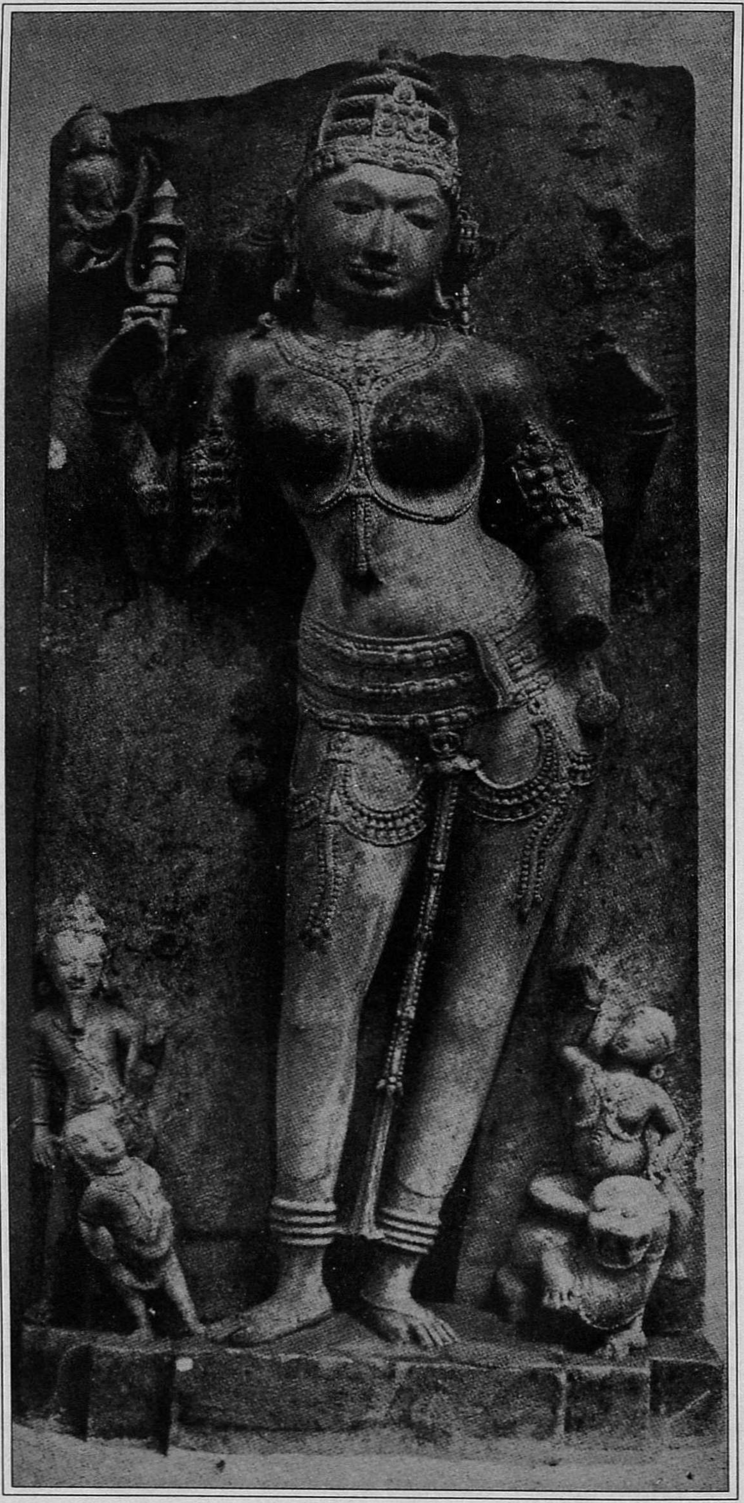


Fig. 128. Sarasvatī consecrated by Bhoja of Dhārā; Paramāra, 11th century A.D., British Museum.

Sūryamaṇḍapa, giving the entire *Sūryaśataka* as a manuscript on stone. I learn from my esteemed friend, Mr. A. S. Nataraja Aiyar, that the whole of *Saundaryalaharī* is inscribed in Grantha letters on the walls of the *maṇḍapa* in the rock temple at Tiruchirāpaḷḷi. Just as in ancient India there are records not only on paper or leaf, but also on metal and stone, similarly we have the book in some tangible form either on stone or on brick or on metal sheet as something more permanent than paper, leaf and birch bark. But in whatever form it was, the manuscript composed of leaves shown in the hands of the deity presiding over knowledge in any form, was the actual emblem of knowledge.

The University was sometimes world famous as in the case of the ones of Taxilā, Banaras, Nālandā, Vikramaśilā, Valabhī, Kāñchī, and so forth. In all these Universities they had great libraries (*Pustakabhāṇḍāras*) and in the hall containing such books was an image of Sarasvatī with the book in her hand. One of the finest examples of such figures is the famous inscribed Sarasvatī given by Bhoja for his University at Dhārā which is now in the British Museum (Fig. 128).

In fact the libraries attached to Colleges and Universities were known as *Sarasvatībhaṇḍāras.* An inscription from Shermādevī mentions the gift by a Brahmin for a *Sarasvatībhaṇḍāra* in a temple. The temples were great centres of learning and such colleges were often maintained by the temple and the libraries also were, therefore, similarly maintained. In another inscription from Śrīraṅgam we learn that there was a *Sarasvatībhaṇḍāra* attached to the temple. As, according to the *Āgamas,* a temple of the first magnitude should have a library, the Śrīraṅgam temple, an important one, also had such an adjunct. That there were Curators in charge of the libraries is gathered from the mention of *Sarasvatībhaṇḍāgārikas*, provision for whose maintenance is made by a Western Chāḷukya general of Tribhuvanamalla Someśvara's time in an inscription from Nagarī, in Hyderabad State. From the copper plate of Devapāla, issued from Mudgagiri (Mānghir), at the request of

Fig. 129. Brahmā with book in his hand, Vākāṭaka, 6th century A.D., Elephanta.

Fig. 130. Sarasvatī, Kushāṇa, 2nd century A.D., Lucknow Museum.

Mahārāja Balaputradeva of Suvarṇadvīpa, through a messenger, recording the grant of five villages in the district of Rājagṛiha in the Śrīnagara division, we learn that the purpose includes amongst various other important items like the maintenance of the monks at Nālandā, the copying of manuscripts in the monastery built by the Sumatran king. This shows the great importance attached, not only to the preparation of manuscripts, but also their care in a library. In

Fig. 131. Māṇikkavāchakar, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Madukkūr, South India.

the great University at Valabhī and also at Kanheri we have other instances of libraries. Two Vijayanagar inscriptions of the time of Bukka II and Devarāya mention royal patronage for a library attached to the Gungeri muṭṭ. At the latter the donor Bhadravishṇu made his gift during the time of Amoghavarsha I for the purchase of books. It was not only in such Hindu educational institutions that Sarasvatī was enshrined. At Nālandā we have an instance of the beautiful Buddhist Goddess of Learning shown with a *Vīṇā* in her hand. It would be interesting also to recall here that the earliest image of Sarasvatī is a Jain one of the Kushāṇ period with an inscription on a pedestal now preserved in the Lucknow Museum (Fig. 130).

Not only the Lord, as teacher of the highest wisdom taught, but also the *Vedas* were glorified. The Veda itself, was conceived as *Trayīpurusha*, as it is usually daily invoked during the *Sandhyā*. We have an interesting instance of a big college of the time of Kṛishṇa III in the village of Salodgi in Bijapur, originally known as Pavittage, where Nārāyaṇa, the Minister of the Rāshṭrakuṭa emperor, founded this interesting institution as a temple and educational mansion dedicated to *Trayīpurusha*. The college so flourished that it had to arrange as many as 27 hostels for students who hailed from different parts. Instances of ministers inducing their masters to maintain such institutions are not wanting. The Bāhūr plates of Nṛipatuṅgavarman record the grant of three villages for maintaining the college at the request of his minister. At Tiruvottiyūr we have a grand instance of a munificent grant made for the maintenance of a pavilion known as *Vyākaraṇadāna-maṇḍapa,* for the upkeep of teachers and pupils who studied grammar and for the worship of the Lord Vyākaraṇadānaperumāl who, it was believed, in this very *maṇḍapa* was pleased to appear before Pāṇini Bhagavān for fourteen continuous days to teach him the first fourteen aphorisms which begin Pāṇini's grammar. This is an instance of the worship of the Lord Dakshiṇāmūrti Śiva or Naṭeśa, who taught the essentials of grammar to Pāṇini by the beat of his drum. While at Sālotgi the Lord is conceived as the embodiment of the *Veda*, he is here conceived as the Originator of grammar. In such cases the figure of Śiva as the teacher, usually in his Dakshiṇāmūrti form, is given, and placed in the *maṇḍapa* as is usually done in every temple; and in his hand was always a manuscript of palm leaves symbolizing knowledge.

How carefully some manuscripts of texts were preserved in such places of learning is easily understood by the story of Haridāsa who tried to get a manuscript of Udayana's *Kusumāñjali* from Mithilā to Bengal and failed in his attempt and had to depend on his memory for

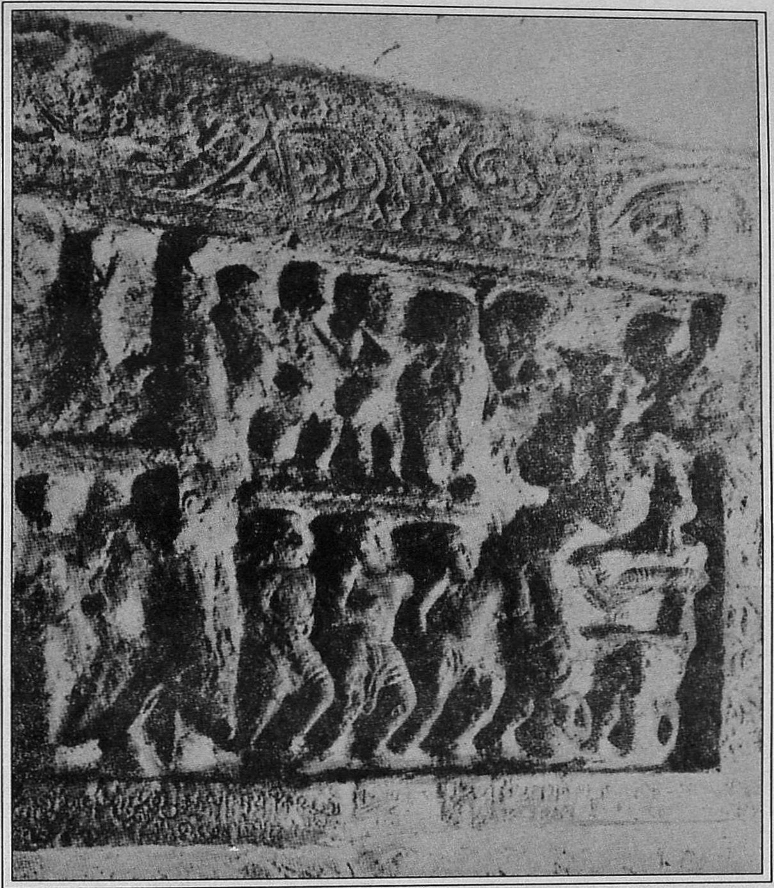


Fig. 132. Nandivarman chosen as King by the people headed by the authorities of the University (Ghatikā), Pallava, 8th century A.D., Kāñchīpuram, South India.

all the Kārikās for which he wrote his own commentary in the absence of that of Udayana.

The archaeological remains at Nālandā, at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, at Taxilā and at various other places show the great institution, at work teaching, feeding and maintaining several hundreds of students and teachers. We know from copper plate grants that several villages were donated for the maintainence of these great centres of learning, as at Nālandā. Some of the seats of learning were so famous that even princes were sent from distant countries to get the highest education from distant universities, as at Taxilā. Again and again in the *Jātaka* we are told that this or that prince went to Taxilā to have his learning. The *Kathāsaritsāgara* narrates the story of how a Brahmin sent his son for higher studies to Valabhī from his home in Antarvedi in the Gangetic valley. An early Kadamba inscription of Kākutsthavarman describes very graphically the expedition of Māyūraśarman, the founder of the Kadamba line, to Kāñchī for studies in that famous centre of learning.

evam āgate kadambakule śrīmān
babhūva dvijottamaḥ nāmato
mayūraśarmmeti
śrutaśīlaśauchādyalaṅkritaḥ,
yaḥ prayāya pallavendrapurīm guruṇā
samam vīraśarmmaṇā adhijigāmsuḥ
pravachanam nikhilam ghaṭikām
viveśāśu tarkkukaḥ, tatra
pallavāśvasamasthena kalahena tīvreṇa
roshitaḥ kaliyugesminnaho bata
kshatrāt
paripelavā vipratā yataḥ, gurkulāni
samyagārādhya śākhām adhītyāpi
yatnataḥ brahmasiddhiryyadi
nripādhīnā kim ataḥparam dukkham
ityataḥ
kuśasamiddṛishatsrugājyacharugrāh-
aṇādidakshena paṇinā
udvavarha dīptimachchhastram
vijigīshamāṇo vasundharām

—*Epigraph. Ind.*, viii, p. 32.

It is there that when he had a conflict with the cavalrymen of the Pallava army he abandoned his life of a Brahmachārin for that of a soldier and grasped sword for fighting the Pallavas and established the Kadamba kingdom. That the Pallavas fostered learning in Kāñchī and that the University at Kāñchī was one of the best in India is clearly seen from the fact that Hiuen Tsang gives a glowing account of it. Both in the Pallava inscriptions, as in the Velūrpāḷayam plates, wherein we learn of the *Ghaṭikā,* and also in the sculptures of the Vaikunṭhanātha temple at Kāñchī representing scenes from Pallava history, the university or *Ghaṭikā* figures again in the scene of the accession of Nandivarman Pallavamalla at the request of the people headed by the *mūlaprakṛitis* and the *Ghaṭikāryas,* authorities of

‖ LOVE SUBLIME ‖

One of the most important of human emotions, love, has been raised to a great spiritual height and presented in a sublime manner in India. The spirit of love in ancient India has been aptly put in the lines of the *Bhagavadgītā*, where the Lord described Himself as love incarnate; but this love is not based on mere physical passion but is elevated to that height, where it is in close union with the Dharmic ideal, righteous conduct.

dharmāviruddho bhūteshu kāmosmi
bharatarshabha
—*Bhagavadgītā.*

The ideal of the householder and the purpose of the institution of marriage have been clearly indicated in the lines of Kālidāsa like

api prasannena maharshiṇā tvam
samyagvinīyānumato gṛihāya
kālohyayam saṅkramitum dvitīyam
sarvopakārakshamam āśramam te
—*Raghuvamśa, v, 10.*

and

pariṇetuḥ prasūtaye
—*Raghuvamśa, i, 25.*

The student after the completion of his studies marries in his anxiety to continue his race which he owes as a duty to his forefathers.

na samyatas tasya babhūva rakshitur
visarjayed yam sutajanmaharshitaḥ
ṛiṇābhidhānāt svayameva kevalam tadā
pitṛīṇām mumuche sa bandhanāt
—*Raghuvamśa, iii, 20.*

Even such a sage as Jaratkāru, who could not think of marrying, was forced to give up his celebacy because his duty required his choosing a consort; and it was only the householder in the company of his wife who could be of the utmost help to everyone in society and this *āśrama* amongst all has been stressed by Kālidāsa.

Love in ancient India was a sacred one that started on the threshold of youth and took deeper and deeper root as years advanced, the love that starts with what the eyes discern as portrayed in physical beauty. It was so developed that the lovers were satisfied if there were true reciprocal affection, even if it were only a chance of their perishing without coming together, rather than their coming together, but with the love being only one-sided and unrequited by the other, as Kālidāsa puts it.

anāturotkaṇṭhitayoḥ prasidhyatā
samāgamenāpi ratir na mām prati
parasparaprāptinirāśayor varam
śarīranāśopi samānurāgayoḥ
—*Mālavikāgnimitram, iii, 15.*

The final culmination of this great love, which recalls the love of Romeo and Juliet, has been graphically presented in the picture of king Aja with his heart broken with grief at the death of his beloved wife Indumatī. The nail of grief pierced his tender heart like a banyan sapling bursting from the crevice of a palace and it was with great difficulty he could, just because it was his duty to look after his young boy, continue to live for a few years, with only that little happiness which he could have during the occasional unions with his beloved in dreams, and by a look at painted portraits of his noble queen.

The grief of Rāma, sorrowing for Sītā, and that of Sītā, pining for Rāma, in the Aśoka grove, are the most classical instances of the sublime

Fig. 135. Close embrace, Rāshṭrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Ellora, Deccan.

Fig. 136. The kiss, Eastern Gaṅgā, 13th century A.D., Koṇārak, Orissa.

love as conceived in India. The comical aspect of love is presented here and there in the epics and *Kāvyas* as, for instance, Śakāra running after Vasantasenā in the *Mṛichchhakaṭika*, Kīchaka after Draupadī in the *Mahābhārata,* Śūrpaṇakhā running after the two lovely brothers in the forest. The last mentioned has a beautiful representation in the sculptures from Deogarh. The purely physical passionate form of love is depicted in stories of Indra's covert approaches to Ahalyā and the lovely Tilottamā coveted by the brothers, Sunda and Upasunda. There are sculptural representations of the former in the Virūpāksha temple at Paṭṭaḍakkal and the story of Tilottamā has graphic narration in the sculptures at Deogarh. The sublime yet passionate out-pouring of the heart of the Yaksha, exiled from his beloved wife, as pictured in the *Meghadūta,* is recalled in a sculptural masterpiece at Ellora (Fig. 135) that approaches the spirit of the verse in that close embrace when body entwines body in the exactly similar tear-stricken, emaciated, tormented condition of separation.

aṅgenāṅgam pratanu tanunā
gāḍhataptena taptam
sāsreṇāśrudrutam
aviratotkaṇṭham utkaṇṭhitena
ushṇochchhvāsam
samadhikatarochchhvāsinā dūravartī
saṅkalpais tair viśati vidhinā
vairiṇā ruddhamārgaḥ

—*Meghadūta,* ii, 42.

The fond kiss of the noble and true lover comparable to that of the moon on the lips of the night damsel

aṅgulībhiriva keśasañchayam
sannikṛishya timiram marīchibhiḥ
kuḍmalīkṛitasarojalochanam
chumbatīva rajanīmukham śaśi

—*Kumārasambhava,* viii, 63.

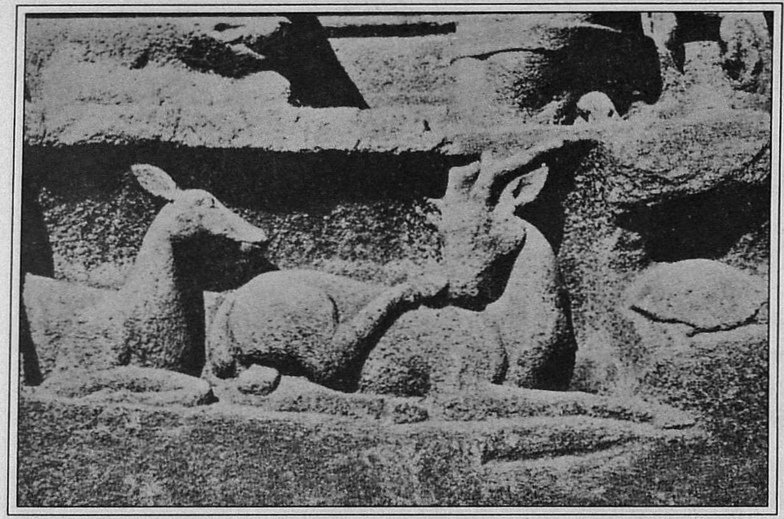


Fig. 137. The loving deer, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahābalipuram, South India.

has its sculptural picture at Koṇārak than which it is impossible to think of more effective depiction (Fig. 136).

But even in such cases of intense love and passionate adoration of physical beauty there was always a lingering fear that there may be some unnoticed error to be avoided, which was born purely of that noble regard for the *Dharmic* aspect of love, as in every other thing. That is why king Dushyanta, who fell in love with Śakuntalā at first sight, stopped for a moment and thought that, as he was a *Kshatriya*, he could not love a hermit girl who was probably beyond his reach. But at once his heart assured him that as he was a noble-minded prince and, as being attracted by her charm he fell in love with her, it should be that she was not a hermit girl but a *Kshatriya*, one fit for him to wed; for was he not a true prince and could he do any wrong? And in such cases of doubt it was very clear that even unconsciously he could act only in the right manner as his heart would always dictate only the path of virtue; so by intuition he could know that his love for Śakuntalā was right.

asamśayam kshatraparigrahakshamā yad
āryam asyām anurāgi me manaḥ
satām hi sandehapadeshu vastushu
pramāṇam antaḥkaraṇapravṛittayaḥ
—Abhiñjānaśākuntalam i, 21.

Constancy in love was the highest quality stressed, and in the grief of Rāma for Sītā is summed up the essence of this sacred love of the husband for his wife. Kālidāsa tenderly puts it in a verse, where he explains how, even when Sītā was banished from the kingdom by Rāma according to his notion of duty towards his subjects, she was yet the lady he adored in his heart of hearts whence she could never be banished.

babhūva rāmas sahasā sabāshpas
tushāravarshīva sabāshpachandraḥ
kaulīnabhītena gṛihān nirastā na tena
vaidehasutā manastaḥ
—Raghuvamśa, xiv, 84.

Sītā in her turn, though banished in the forest, bore this patiently, nay, was even pleased to some extent in the thought that Rāma could only have a golden effigy of her for performing the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice, as he could not think in terms of any other who could take the place of his beloved Sītā.

sītām hitvā daśamukharipur nopayeme yad anyām
tasyā eva pratikṛitisakho yat kratūn ājahāra
vṛittāntena śravaṇavishayaprāpiṇā tena bhartus
sā durvāram katham api parityāgaduḥkham vishehe
— Raghuvamśa, xiv, 87.

This constancy in love is presented in a telling fashion by extending this great quality even to animals and birds, in which we cannot normally expect great discernment, but the constancy in such birds as Chakravāka and swans and beasts like the deer or elephant, is one of the most remarkable pictures painted by the poet to drive home the need of this great spirit in the heart of man, the noblest of God's creation (Fig. 138). The grief of the Chakravāka bird, when separated from her mate, is proverbial .

Fig. 138. Rāma and Sītā loving like Chakravāka birds, Śailendra, 9th century A.D., Prambanan, Java.

śaśinam punar eti śarvarī
dayitā dvandvacharam patatriṇam
iti tau virahāntarakshamau katham
atyantagatā na mām daheḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, vii, 56.

The tenderness of the she-elephant, presenting lotus fibres to her Lord, has been the theme of not only the poets but also the artists as can be seen in a sculpture from the Amarāvatī *stūpa* rail recalling the verse of Kālidāsa

chitradvipāḥ padmavanāvatīrnāḥ kareṇubhir
dattamṛiṇālabhaṅgāḥ
dadau rasāt paṅkajareṇugandhi gajāya
gaṇḍūshajalam kareṇuḥ
—*Kumārasambhava*, iii, 37.

The beautiful sculptures from Mahābalipuram showing the tenderness of a deer for the doe as the latter rubs her eye on his antler (Fig. 137) only recalls Kālidāsa's lines

śṛiṅge kṛishṇamṛigasya vāmanayanam

kaṇḍūyamānām mṛigīm
—*Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, vi, 17.

and

madhu dvirephaḥ kusumaikapātre papau
priyām svām anuvartamānaḥ
śṛiṅgeṇa cha sparśanimīlitākshām mṛigīm
akaṇḍūyata kṛishṇasāraḥ
—*Kumārasambhava*, iii, 36.

But it is not that the love for one damsel was the only feature of this sublime love. Even where the harem was a large one the lover behaved with equal courtesy and regard towards each one composing it and this type of lover known as *Dakshiṇanāyaka* has formed the theme of several poets. The lover's constancy to one, his courtesy towards several damsels, without hurting the feelings of anyone, by cleverly managing them all, the disappointment caused by a lover, when he fails to keep his appointment at a place to meet his mate, or when he stealthily seeks the company of another damsel, the eager expectancy of the beautiful damsel awaiting her lord, or with her hair rolled up uncared for during the separation from her husband when he is away and so forth, all form the subject of description under the theme *Nāyikā* and *Nāyakā* of various types known to poets and *Ālaṅkārikas*.

RIGHTEOUS WEALTH

In ancient India wealth constituted one of the most important factors in life. It mattered so much that it was considered one of the four *Purushārthas*. Wealth was sought by one and all not for one's own sake but for the benefit of all for which it could be utilised. Similarly it was earned with that eye on the righteous mode of gaining it and the purpose was always to utilise it in the best interest of society. Even in the simple Vedic hymns, where treasure, food, garments, cows, horses and other type of prosperity are sought, it is sought not for one's own enjoyment as such but for its being utilised for the good of many. All this wealth in its highest form of abundance was overflowing in the treasury of the king as we see from all the statements in inscriptions from the earliest times—from the one of Rudradāman onwards, where his fabulous wealth described as *dharmopārjita*, is all rightly earned for the benefit of needy persons. Staggering versions of *dāna* (gifts) on occasions like sacrifices, performed by great kings, are recorded, as, for instance, in the Nānāghāṭ cave inscription of Śātakarṇī, where in the sacrifices like Aśvamedha, Ukthya, Agnyādheya, Rājasūya, Aptoryāma and so forth he made *dānas* consisting of villages, milch cows, elephants, horses, horse-chariots, silver pots, silver ornaments, dresses and so on, the highest number of cows given being 11,000 and of *Kārshāpaṇas* 24,000. The resources of the empire can be judged easily by the munificent *dakshiṇās* in these sacrifices, and as Śātakarṇī ruled only for ten years this appears almost incredible. King Khāravela of Kaliṅga made a present also of the *Kalpataru* and similar staggering accounts of *dāna* by Ushavadāta, the son-in-law of Nahapāṇa is given in his Nāsik inscription. The temporary bankruptcy of the emperor by such munificent gifts during his frequent *yāgas*, symbolising his spirit of sacrifice for others without the least concern for himself, is put in the most beautiful fashion by Kālidāsa who compares the king, bereft of his riches, by giving them to others, to the moon during the dark fortnight, with all his ambrosial body eaten up by the gods, and who is, on that account, more praiseworthy and charming.

sthāne bhavān ekanaradhipas san
akiñchanatvam makhajam vyanakti
paryāyapītasya surair himāmśoḥ
kalākshayaś ślaghyataro hi vṛiddheḥ
—*Raghuvamśa*, vi, 16.

The concept of wealth in India has been in terms of the fabulous. Imagination, fertile in an abundance, has created the *Kalpataru* and *Kalpavallī*, the wishfulfilling tree and creeper, all for satisfying others and the proud possesser of it in fable, prince Jimūtavāhana, was equally anxious to give it all away to his subjects. The great story of Māndhātā illustrates the interest of the king in utilising all his resources and wealth for the benefit of his subjects. For seven nights and days according to the wish of the emperor there was a rain of corn and garments and finally of gold and there are beautiful depictions in panels at Barabudur in Java showing how the people gathered them (Fig. 139). They stored up the shower of wealth with great glee. Not only the earning of wealth was to be on righteous principles but the expenditure was also to be similar, and receipt of wealth was also to be from immaculate persons by worthy ones. Ill-gotten wealth in the hands of wicked ones was in every way to be avoided, and its receipt, even unknowingly, was fraught with sin

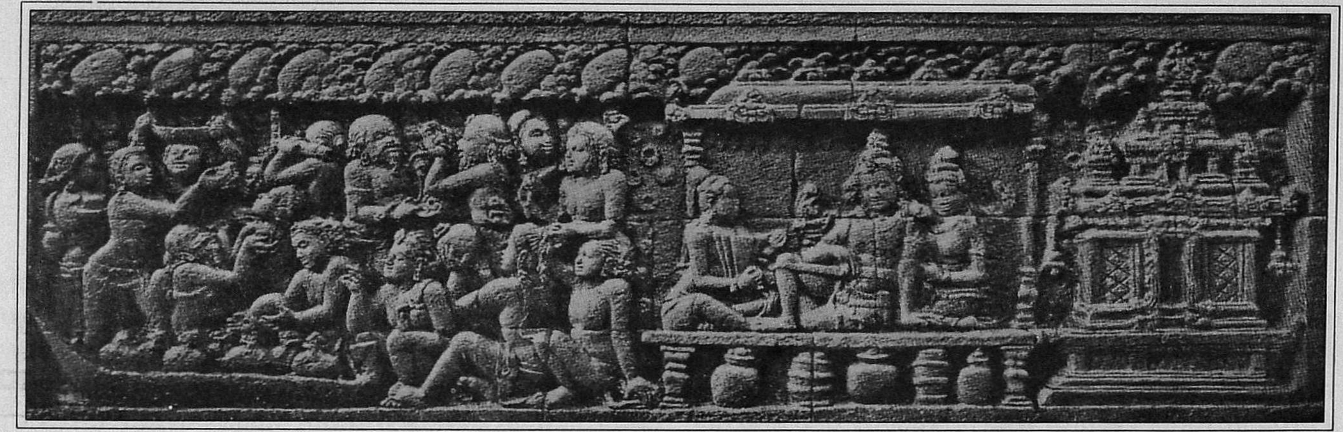


Fig. 139. Rain of wealth, Śailendra, 8th century A.D., Barabudur, Java.

and to be expiated as may be seen in the hymn repeated every day, for the destruction of sins from unworthy actions. It was in the same category as forbidden food and the foul remains of others and to be avoided.

āpaḥ punantu pṛithivīm pṛithivī pūtā punātu
mām punantu brahmaṇaspatir brahma
pūtā punātu mām yad
uchchhishṭam abhojyam yad vā
duścharitam mama sarvam punantu mām
āposatām cha pratigraham svāhā

as Bhartṛihari has put it, the ideal was just the other way, that wealth should be freely enjoyed and given away and never be hoarded up as otherwise it is finally enjoyed by someone unconnected with it, like the honey of the bee which is neither tasted by the insect nor offered by it to another but finally enjoyed by man.

dātavyam bhoktavyam dhanavishaye
sangraho na kartavyaḥ
paśyeha madhukarīṇām sañchitam artham
haranti manujāḥ
—*Nītiśataka.*

The prayer has always been

annam cha no bahu bhavet atithīmścha
labhemahi
yāchitāras cha nas santu mā cha
yāchishma kañchana.

Let us have several guests and let our food increase so that we can feed others. May many ask of us so that we may give, but may we not be in a position to ask of others.

As every activity in this world was based on financial resources and wealth was at the bottom of everything, *'Ārtha'* was naturally one of the main pivots on which life rested, but it was always circumscribed by its attitude towards *Dharma* and by the powerful influence of *Dharma* on it. The king was to collect taxes gently like the bee gathering honey from flowers, like a gardener gathering flowers without cutting at the roots of the tree as the charcoal-burner.

pushpam pushpam vichinvītā
mūlachchhedam na kārayed
mālākāra ivārāme na yathāngārakārakaḥ
—*Mahābhārata*, iv, 34, 18.

॥ SAṀSKĀRAS ॥

The stamp of civilization on man shows how he has advanced from the stage of the caveman and made himself the controller of elements around him to a certain degree. From the life of a savage to the life of a cultured being is a great story. The way of life has been conceived in different countries in different ways. Many mysteries of life have been assiduously studied and several sages have given their interpretation. True civilisation only means an honest, happy and satisfactory state of existence, where individuals in society live in peace, not only for their own benefit but also for the benefit of others. A savage in a famished state may turn into an animal, but a civilized man not only refrains from hurting others, but thinks considerately of the needs of another. Thus the poor Brahmin, and the members of his family in Kurukshetra, as the story is narrated in the *Mahābhārata,* made an offer of the *saktuprastha* or a meagre quantity of parched rice to satisfy the hunger of the guest, though all of them were dying of hunger and it was this alone which could keep them alive. That is why the mongoose remarked in the great Rājāsuya Yāga of Yudhishṭhira that all the gifts made in the sacrifice were nothing when compared with the parched rice offered by the hungry Brahmin. The primitive man has more of animal instincts in him, but the more perfected, civilized man has lovable features, charming courtesy and noble qualities. All these are due to ages of careful and assiduous practice and training from the very birth. This also accounts for heredity, in which also there is so much of stress on qualities of groups and tribes. The way of life was perfected and every little act from morning till night, from birth till death was conceived in India as part of *Dharma,* and from the time the child was conceived in the womb, the effect of this refinement came to be present in what are known as *Saṁskāras.*

The importance of *Saṁskāra* is clearly given by Kālidāsa when he describes how the new born child, like a gem from the mine, shone brilliantly by such *saṁkāras* as *Jātakarma* performed for it by sage Vasishṭha, the family priest.

sa jātakarmaṇyakhile tapasvinā tapovanād
etya purodhasā kṛite
dilīpasūnur maṇir ākarodbhavaḥ
prayuktasamskāra ivādhikam babhau

—*Raghuvaṁśa,* iii, 18.

Vālmīki equally effectively emphasises its importance when he makes Hanumān describe Sītā, the picture of grief in the Aśoka grove of Rāvaṇa, as like one without *saṁskāra*

saṁskāreṇa yathā hīnām vācham
arthāntaram gatām

—*Rāmāyaṇa,* v, 15, 39.

The word *Saṁskāra* means refinement. It is a religious ceremony of refinement in various stages of life that polished and made a disciplined man of a child unaffected by good or bad.

The anxiety of the parents for proper progeny accounts for various restrictions placed on even the coming together of the married couple. The duty of a young married man to perpetuate his line is clearly given as one of the obligatory rites.

putreṇa lokāñjayati pautreṇānantyam
aśnute

—*Manusmṛiti,* ix, 137.

and that is why it is held that soon after the *ṛitusnāna* the husband should see his wife with the eye of love. In this context

> *dharmalopabhayād rājñīm ṛitusnātām*
> *imām smaran*
> *pradakshiṇakriyārhāyām tasyām tvam*
> *sādhu nācharaḥ*
>
> —*Raghuvamśa*, i, 76.

is a significant verse in the *Raghuvamśa*, and Dilīpa, in spite of the fact that he was just acting in *dhārmic* fashion, had neglected unknowingly some other factor, namely the presence of the divine cow, and by his failing to pay obeisance to her, he received the curse that delayed the birth of his offspring.

Fig. 140. Māyā's dream of Bodhisattva entering her womb, Śuṇga, 2nd century B.C., Bhārhut, Indian Museum.

The *garbhādhāna*, the very first *saṁskārā*, is presented in a very peculiar and imaginative fashion in sculpture. In the case of some of the most important personalities that we know, like Buddha, Māyādevī dreams of the descent of the Boddhisattva in the form of a white elephant from the Tushita heaven entering her womb (Fig. 140). Similarly the mother of Ādinātha dreams of the descent of Tīrthaṅkara in the form of a bull. *Kuñjara* elephant and *Vṛishabha* (bull) represent the foremost of any class or order, *śreshṭha* amongst things, and these *Mahāpurushas* are, therefore, shown descending in this fashion. Thus their entering the womb of their respective mothers, is so suggested, that at once we can understand from it that it begins with the *garbhādhāna*, and the *garbhādhāna* alone is meant.

The next stage of the pregnant woman when she becomes emaciated, discards ornaments to some extent and expresses her various desires for this or that, as is so beautifully described by Kālidāsa in the case of the pregnancy of Sudakshiṇā, is exceedingly well represented in sculpture in the case of Māyādevī herself. In a beautiful medallion from Amarāvatī (Fig. 141), where the pregnant queen Māyā is seated wearing the minimum of ornaments, the attendants come all around her, offering her various items of toilet and decoration, and Śuddhodana pays a visit to see and enquire if she had any special wish to be fulfilled, the literary description is faithfully mirrored.

The parting and dressing of the hair, decoration with flowers, etc., which is all described by the *saṁskāra puṁsavana śimantonnayana,* are suggestive of keeping the pregnant lady in good cheer and beautiful, the husband himself appropriately attending to this, and Kālidāsa shows how well Dilīpa performed these ceremonies according to his wealth, position and affection for his queen.

> *priyānurāgasya yaśassamunnater*
> *bhujārjjitānām cha digantasampadām*
> *yathākramam pumsavanādikāḥ kṛiyā*
> *dhriteścha dhīras sadṛiśīr vyadhatta saḥ*
>
> —*Raghuvamśa,* iii, 10.

Of several sculptures to illustrate this subject there is one from Mathurā which is very charming.

The next stage is when great care is taken of the pregnant lady, with constant attendance on her with the help of physicians, specialists in the subject, as given in the verse

Fig. 141. Māyā's dohada, Śuddhodana's visit, Sātavāhana, 2nd century A.D., Amarāvatī, Madras Museum.

kumārabhṛityākuśalair anushṭhite
bhishagbhir āptair atha garbhabharmaṇi
patiḥ pratītaḥ prasavonmukhīm priyām
dadarśa kāle divam abhritām iva
—*Raghuvamśa*, iii, 12.

There is sculptural parallel to it from the Amarāvatī *stūpa*, where in the place of physicians, the very Lokapālas are made to take the place of guardians to look after *garbhabharma* or taking care of the pregnant lady.

The birth of the child is a great event and the *sūtikāgṛiha*, the room where the child is born, is filled with not only special attendants, required on the occasion, but, as we can see from the graphic picture presented in the *Harshacharita* in the case of queen Yaśomatī, there are various practices pertaining to what may be called ritual based on folk faith and belief, in addition to other and more orderly *saṁskāras* like *Jātakarma* which come in later.

sakhyaś chāsyāḥ pramodavisphāritair
lochanapuṭair āsannaprasavamahotsava
dhiyeva dhavalayantyo bhavanam
vikachakumudatamālakuvalayapalāśa-
vṛishṭimayam rakshābalividhim
ivānavaratam vidadhānā dikshu kshaṇam
api na mumuchuḥ pārśvam
—*Harshacharita*, iv, p. 147.

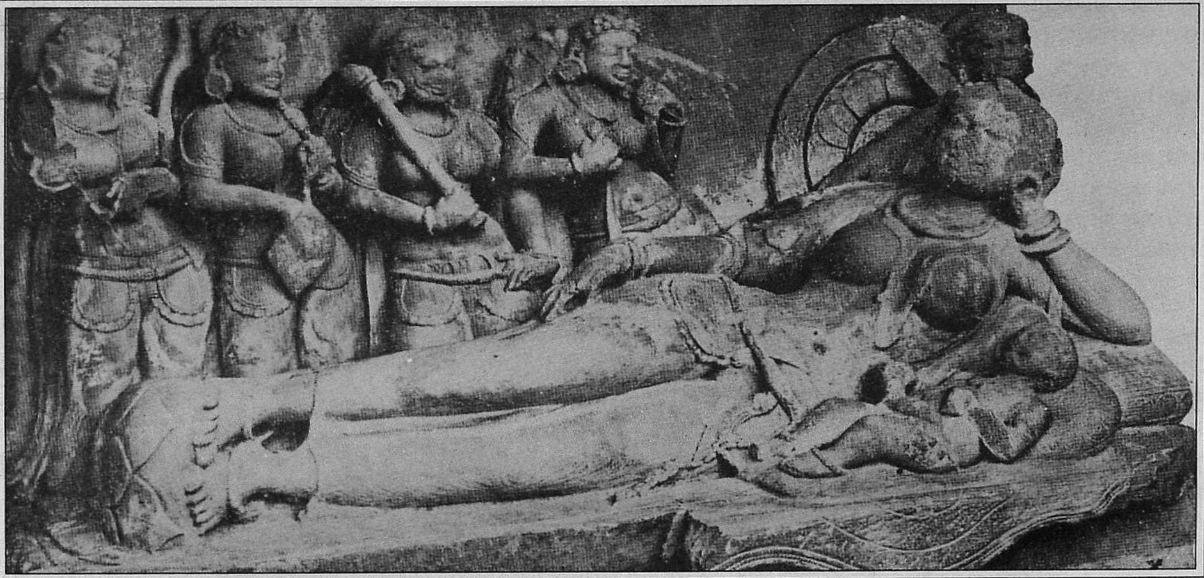


Fig. 142. Mother and child, Gupta, 6th century, A.D., Gwalior Museum.

There are several plaques from Bengal representing mother and child, wherein the Navagrahas are figured prominently, as they are responsible for the determination of the future of the child. It should be remembered that as soon as the child is born, the time of birth and the position of the stars is calculated, to find out the future career of the new born baby. Probably there is no more beautiful sculpture of the mother and child type than the one from the Gwalior Museum (Fig. 142). At Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, where a scribe is shown very busy taking down notes and scratching with his iron stylus on palm leaves, the predictions made after calculations, based on planetary positions, by astrologers, questioned by Śuddhodana, who had sumptuously fed them, is represented.

From Barabudur we have some sculptures to represent *Jātakarma* or even probably the *Nāmakaraṇa* (Fig. 144). The father and the mother together, or sometimes the mother alone, are shown with the child in the mother's lap and the priest is introduced, sprinkling holy water after the ceremony of the new born child for its *dīrghāyutva*—a long life of a hundred years which has always been the span of life as desired in India. It is to be remembered here that *Nāmakaraṇa* and its significance have been so very much realised that special stress is laid on the type of name to be used, the criterion in choosing names, and the question of more than one name, including a secret name which was usually kept away from all except the nearest and dearest ones. Dilīpa names his son so for specific reasons

śrutasya yāyād ayam antam arbhakas tathā
pareshām yudhi cheti pārthivaḥ
avekshya dhātor gamanārtham
arthavichchakāra nāmnā raghum
ātmasambhavam

—*Raghuvamśa*, iii, 21.

As is obvious, the name given to a child is more important than anything else as it is only by its name that it gets a distinction

nāmākhilasya vyavahārahetus śubhāvaham
karmasu bhāgyahetuḥ
nāmnaiva kīrtim labhate manushyas tataḥ
praśastam khalu nāmakarma.

The *Karṇavedhana* or the boring of the ear was another important ceremony done very

early in childhood for protection from diseases and for decoration as *Suśruta* explains it

> *rakshābhūshaṇanimittam bālasya karṇau vidhyet*

and a look at any sculpture in India would show the tremendous significance of this ceremony, without which there could be no hole pierced in the ear lobe for wearing any *Kuṇḍala*, either *makara* or *patra* or *ratna*.

The child usually was taken out from home only when it was a few months old, and that, too, on an auspicious day, to the nearest temple or place of worship of the favourite tutelary deity. An excellent sculpture from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, like several others from other Buddhist monuments, gives a graphic picture of this ceremony of *Nishkramaṇa* for the child (Fig. 143). The child in this case is Siddhārtha

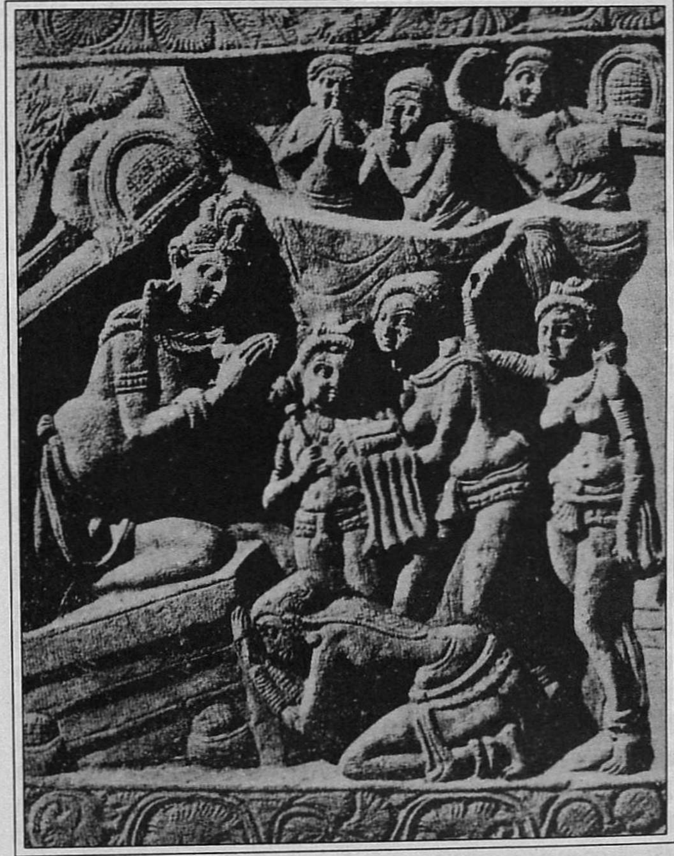


Fig. 143. Presentation of child to the family deity, Ikshvāku, 3rd century A.D., Nāgārjunakoṇḍa.

presented to the family deity of Śuddhodana in the customary fashion. The child was made to bow but the deity suddenly presented himself and clasped his hands in reverence to the Enlightened One to be. Soon after this ceremony the child is provided with toys and then begins his *bāla-līlā* or childish sports. We have several excellent sculptures representing the child with toys.

The *Annaprāśana* ceremony is a very important one in the early stages of a child because it first introduces the baby to solid food to which it was so far unaccustomed. An excellent Rajput painting of Kṛishṇa crying for the moon and refusing to take food is just to illustrate the state of the child after its initiation into the mystery of taking solid food, the *Annaprāśana*; and it is on this that the great Vaishṇava saint Periāḷvār has some beautiful verses where he gives a description of these *bālalīlās* of Kṛishṇa.

The *Chaula* or the *Chūḍākarma* is the next important *saṁskāra* when the child wears the *śikhā* arranged according to the family tradition. The *Śikhā* may be of different types. There are representations in Amarāvatī showing *Pañchaśikhā* and *Kākapakshas* for the child, all frequently seen in sculptures representing Kṛishṇa and Balarāma (Fig. 145), baby Skanda and so forth. Even on the coin of Śrī Yajña Śātakarṇī, the great Sātavāhana king who came to the throne very early, when he was still wearing the side locks, there is a prominent presentation of the *kākapakshas* in his bust (Fig. 82). The *Chūḍākarma* is intimately connected with a twin *saṁskāra,* so to say *aksharābhyāsa* or *lipigrahaṇa*, the learning of the alphabet, the first step to enter the ocean of knowledge, a lively picture of which is given by Kālidāsa in his verse

> *sa vṛittachūlas chalakākapakshakair*
> *amātyaputrais savayobhiranvitaḥ*
> *liper yathāvadgrahaṇena vāṅgmayam*
> *nadīmukheneva samudram āviśat*
>
> —*Raghuvamśa*, iii, 28.

and of which we have several sculptural representations from Sārnāth and Gandhāra in

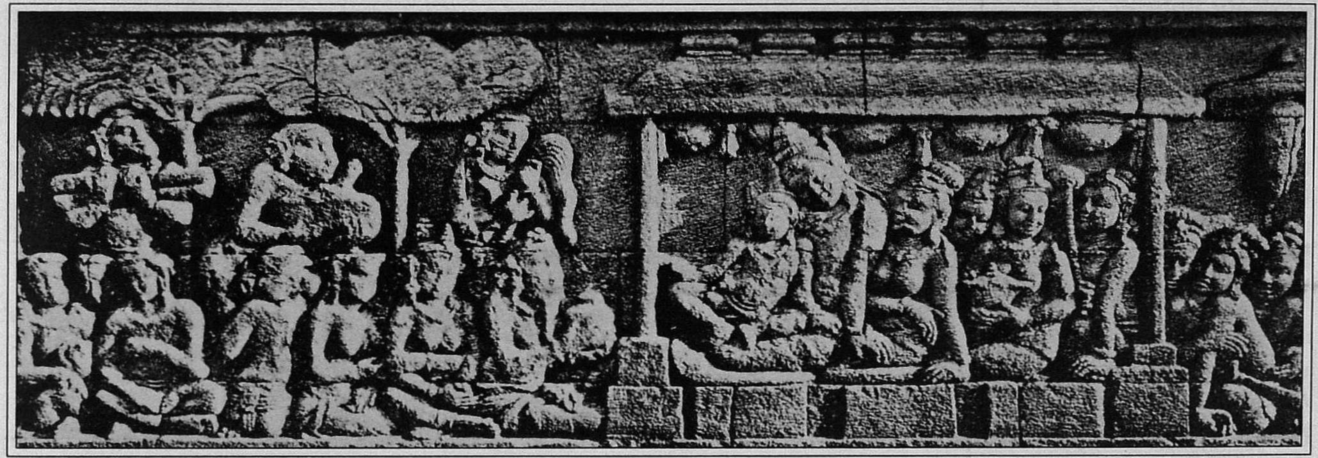


Fig. 144. Jātakarma, Śailendra, 8th century A.D., Barabudur, Java.

the context of Siddhārtha's first lessons at school with a board in his lap to write the letters of the alphabet.

The *upanayana* ceremony is clearly shown at Barabudur in a sculpture where the Bodhisattva is taken near his master and is initiated in the study of *Vidyā*. The *Upanayana saṁskāra* is probably one of the most important in the case of *dvijas*. That is why Manu says

upanīya guruś śishyam śikshayechhaucham āditaḥ
āchāram agnikāryam cha sandhyopāsanam eva cha

—*Manusmṛiti*, ii, 69.

It is this *Upanayana* that almost gives a re-birth to the boy as it were and here he considers the Guru as his father and his new mother in this is Sāvitrī,

tatra yad brahmajanmāsya mauñjībandhanachihnitam
tatrāsya mātā sāvitrī pitā tvāchārya uchyate

—*Manusmṛiti*, ii, 170.

and a great life devoted to studies and discipline begins. Probably the most touching picture of the life of a *Brahmachārin* in his *Gurukula* is given in the *Mahābhārata* in the case of the disciples of the sage Dhaumya. Another sculpture from Java showing the students actually assembled with their hands clasped in *saṅkalpa* fashion, with a determination to start their studies, presents this ritual vividly (Fig. 133). This is only the next stage of the *Brahmachārin* entering on his regular studies of the *Veda* for six months in the year and the *Vedāṅgas* for the rest of it. The month of *Śrāvaṇa* after the *Upanayana* is actually the time when the *Brahmachārin* begins his studies. Apart from the *Upanayana,* the *Upākarma* is also thus graphically presented in sculpture. The life of a *Brahmachārin*, occupying a lower seat than that of the master, seated in front of him, with utmost reverence, with his hands joined together in *Brahmāñjali* as he recites word after word the text of the *Veda* repeated first by the Guru, bowing to the Guru, touching his feet with his hands, the right hand touching the right foot and the left hand the left foot, is all most vividly presented in a beautiful sculpture, in panels that flank the central figure of Agni, now in the Cleveland Museum (see Fig. 33). This method of obeisance to the Guru and the way the hand is held in what is known as *Brahmāñjali* when even a particle of saliva from the mouth falling in the hand being considered *Brahmaviprushaḥ*, while chanting the sacred letters of the *Veda*, recalls at once the text from Manu describing this

Fig. 145. Balarāma and Kṛishṇa wearing Kākapakshas as children, Pāla, 8th century A.D., Pahāḍpur.

brahmāñjalikṛitodhyāpyo laghuvāsā
jitendriyaḥ
—*Manusmṛiti,* ii, 70.

The next stage is the *Samāvartana* when the *Brahmachạ̄rin* takes leave of his *Guru,* after finishing his studies and being ordered by him to enter the life of a householder.

āchāryāya priyam dhanam āhṛitya
prajātantum mā vyavatchhetsīḥ
—*Taittirīyopanishad,* i.

The householder's life is the most useful to society and highly honoured, as is summed up in the line of Kālidāsa.

api prasanneṇā maharshiṇā tvam
samyagvīnīyānumato gṛihāya
kālohyayam samkramitum dvitīyam
sarvopakārakshamam aśramam te
—*Raghuvamśa,* v, 10.

The *Vivāha* or the marriage requires certain preliminaries like the father of the bride being approached and requested for giving his daughter in marriage or his imposing certain conditions for his daughter. For the former we have a sculpture from Ellora, showing Ṛishis requesting Himavān to give away his daughter in marriage to Śiva, and Himavān looks at his wife Menā significantly as Kālidāsa puts it

prāyeṇa gṛihiṇīnetrāḥ kanyārtheshu
kuṭumbinaḥ
—*Kumārasambhava,* vi, 11.

In the case of the latter there are sculptures showing Rāma breaking the bow, as from Ellora, or Arjuna shooting the moving fish to win Draupadī, in a sculpture from Haḷebīḍ, in erstwhile Mysore.

Fig. 146. Terracotta plaque depicting the scene of Udayana eloping with Vāsavadattā, Śuṅga, 2nd century B.C., Kauśāmbī.

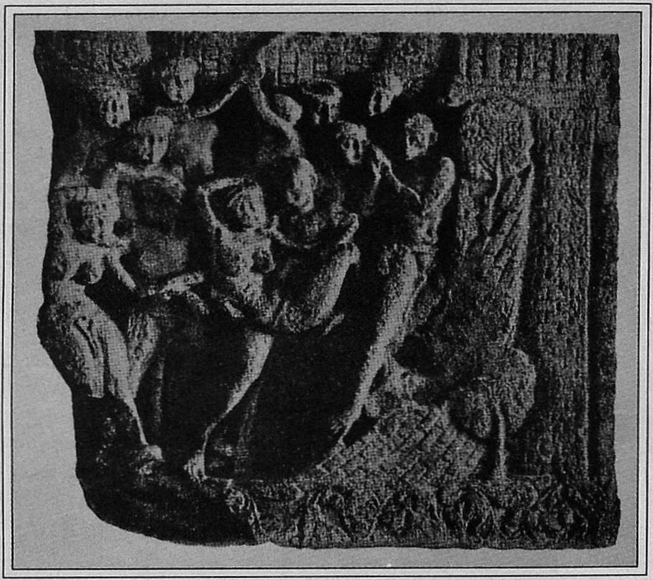


Fig. 147. Unwilling bride carried by force, Sātavāhana, 2nd century A.D., Amarāvatī.

There are various types of marriages, apart from the most common one, the *Brāhma*, where the father presents his daughter in marriage to the chosen bridegroom.

> *āchchhādya chārchayitvā cha śrutiśīlavate svayam*
> *āhūya dānam kanyāyā brāhmo dharmaḥ prakirtitaḥ*
>
> —*Manusmṛiti*, iii, 27.

The *Rākshasa* mode has a vivid picture in a sculpture from Amarāvatī and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa of a number of ruffians carrying away a beautiful damsel (Fig. 147). The *Gāndharva* mode is almost a self-selection by the parties by mutual consent

> *ichchhayānyonyasamyogaḥ*
> *kanyāyās cha varasya cha*
> *gāndharavas sa tu vijñeyo*
> *maithunyaḥ kāmasambhavaḥ*
>
> —*Manusmṛiti*, iii, 32.

and the representation of Udayana carrying away Vāsavadattā on the elephant, as on a plaque from Kausāmbī (Fig. 146), or from one of the carvings from Udayagiri cave in Orissa, depicts this type. For the normal type the usual representations of marriage in sculpture hold good; but it should be noted specially in several of these sculptures, depicting a marriage, as for instance in the Kalyāṇasundara panel from Elephanta (Fig. 2), where Himavān gives away his daughter in marriage to Śiva, the stress is on the grasping of the hand of the bride by the bridegroom. Janaka calls Rāma to hold the hand of Śītā.

> *iyam sītā mama sutā*
> *sahadharmacharī tava*
> *pratīchchha chaināṃ bhadram te*
> *pāṇim grihṇīshva paṇinā*
>
> —*Rāmāyaṇa*, i, 73, 27.

And then there is the *Pāṇigrahaṇa*. In an earlier and later stage of the marriage respectively, when new clothes are presented to the bride and bridegroom by their respective fathers-in law, and the holy water is sprinkled on the bride and bridegroom as *Āśīs*, which is also another ceremony in the marriage, we have vivid presentations in sculpture in panels from Barabudur representing Siddhārtha's marriage. A carving from Koṇārak shows the *Kanyādāna*

Fig. 148. Kanyādāna, Eastern Gaṅgā, 13th century A.D., Koṇārak, Orissa.

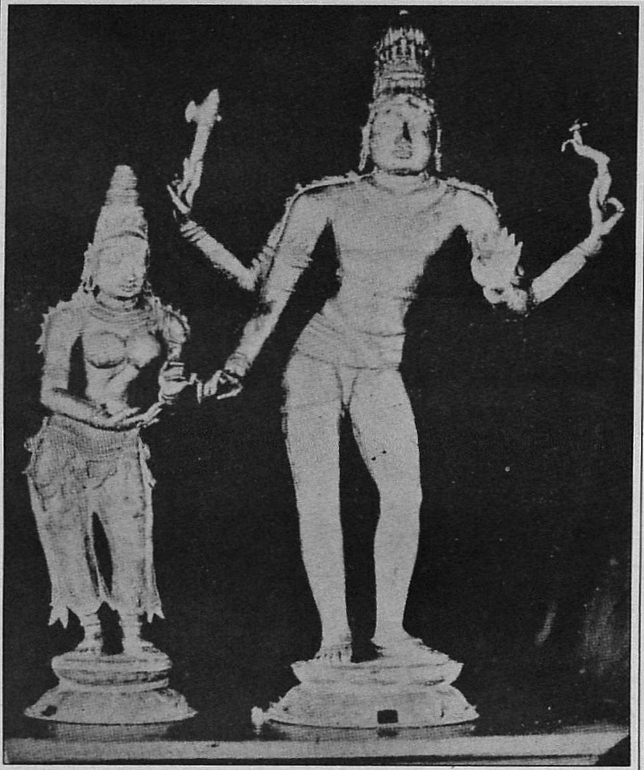
ceremony wherein the father pours water in the hands of the bridegroom to assure him that he is making *Kanyādāna*, the gifting of his daughter as his bride (Fig. 148). Seven steps walked together make the husband and wife friends and companions in life according to the belief

prāhus sāptapadam maitram budhās
tatvārthadarśinaḥ

—*Mahābhārata, iii, 198, 24.*

and this *saptapadī*, a very important part of the marriage ritual, is depicted in some sculptures of Śiva's marriage, like the ones from the Rājshāhi Museum (Fig. 149) and the Bangīya Sāhitya Parishad.

Fig. 149. Saptapadī (Kalyāṇasundara), Pāla, 11th century A.D., Rājshāhi Museum.



Fig, 150. Pāṇigrahaṇa (Kalyāṇasundara), Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Tiruvottiyūr, South India.

Śiva and Pārvatī, standing holding their hands together in the vicinity of the fire (Fig. 150), attended to by Brahmā himself, aided by ṛishis, as at Ellora in a long panel suggests also the *pradakshiṇa* of Agni.

pradakshiṇaprakramaṇāt kriśānor
udarchishas tan mithunam chakāśe
merorupānteshviva vartamānam
anyonyasamsaktam ahastriyāmam
—*Raghuvamśa*, vii, 24.

The *Lājahoma* which is such an important thing in marriage and which has been so happily described by Kālidāsa in the context of the marriage of Indumatī

nitambagurvīguruṇā prayuktā
vadhūr vidhātṛipratimena tena
chakāra sā mattachakoranetrā
lajjāvatī lājavisargam agnau
—*Raghuvamśa*, vii, 25.

has also representation in sculptures where the bride and the bridegroom are shown beside the fire making the offerings to the fire, and from that day onwards begins the daily *Aupāsana*.

As Kālidāsa puts it, the house-holder's life is the most useful to society

kālohyayam samkramitum dvitīyam
sarvopakārakshamam āśramam te
—*Raghuvamśa*, v, 10.

and *atithipūjā* or the looking after the guests is one of the most important duties of the householder. *Ārghya, pādya* and *āchamanīya* are the essential things to be offered to the guest as soon as he arrives. An *atithi*, being a casual visitor, careful attention is all the more necessary in his case. Sculptures from Barabudur beautifully depict this worshipful offering of water as *ārghya* (Fig. 151) and *pādya*

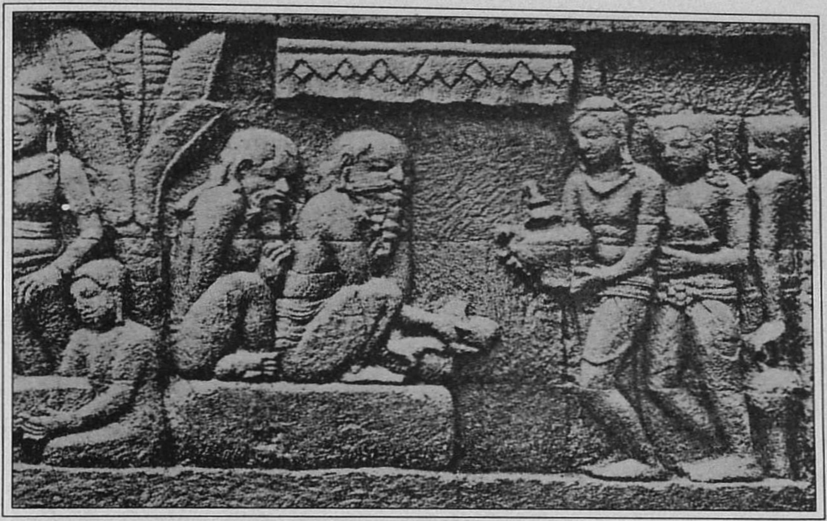


Fig. 151. Ārghya, Śailendra, 8th century A.D., Barabudur, Java.

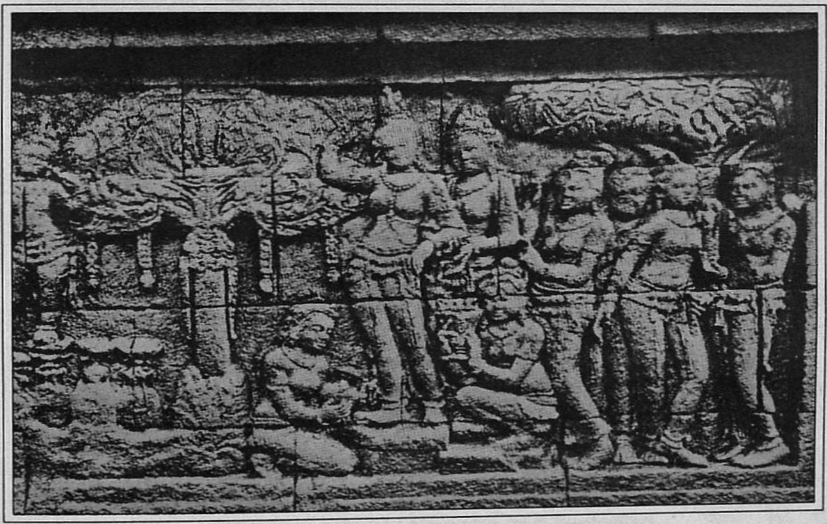


Fig. 152. Pādya, Śailendra, 8th century A.D., Barabudur, Java.

After a long and useful life as householder and after enjoying the sweets of this life, bringing up children and establishing them, the husband and wife enter *Vānaprastha* or a life in the forest, where, detached from the world, but still together as husband and wife, they spend the evening of their life in an even tenor of holiness and meditation and nothing else. The *āśrama* is itself a place of quiet, calm and serene atmosphere where the lion and the deer meet on friendly terms, the sage and his family all ascetics, wear the *kṛishṇājina*, which is so symbolic of a pure and innocent life. The sculpture of Naranārāyaṇa as ascetics from Deogarh (Fig. 36) and that of the saintly lady Svayamprabhā, also from Deogarh, show how the *kṛishṇājina*, is worn on the left shoulder, as described in the *Kṛishṇa Yajurveda.*

ajinam vaso vā dakshiṇata
upavīya.

It is no more any question of toilet for the hair, it is no more any attention for dress or food; it is matted locks and beard. The barber has no place in the forest nor has the washerman. It is a thatched hut that serves as the dwelling, rude in construction with no engineer to plan it, the deer roaming about are the near ones, wild-grown grains provide the coarse food for the sage, and a brook nearby helps the daily bath, *snānakriyā*. Here also the adoration of the guest is a special duty as of the self-sacrificing hare in the story (Fig. 153), recalling the pigeon *(Kapotākhyāna)* in the *Mahābhārata.*

The best stage is that of an ascetic who completely renounces the world and enters into communion with God, where he experiences

or washing the feet (Fig. 152). The water vessel used for *āchamana* is clearly shown in several representations of sages as for instance Agastya, in metal from Vedāraṇyam in South India, but probably it is most telling in the representation of Jahnu's sipping of Gaṅgā from his water vessel and releasing her again through his ear, as depicted at Paṭṭaḍakal in Western India.

Fig. 153. Atithisatkāra, from Śaśajātaka, Ikshvāku, 2nd century A.D., Goli, Andhra Pradesh.

ānanda. Kālidāsa has given an excellent picture of Raghu as an ascetic and the preliminary to this, the shaving of the head and the wearing of *kāshāya* garments as the red monk's robes is beautifully presented in a sculpture from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa where the barber Upāli shaves the six śākya princes admitted to the Order by Buddha. This shaving of the heads of the beautiful locks is a symbol *of sanyāsa*, renouncing the world.

The state of death and the *saṁskāras* attending the burning of the corpse

atha tasya kathamchid aṅkatas svajanas
tām apaniya sundarīm
visasarja tadantyamaṇḍanām
analāyāguruchandanaidhase

—*Raghuvamśa*, viii, 71.

as Kālidāsa puts it, has a very touching picture in a sculpture of Hālidevī, whose beloved husband erected a memorial for her with an inscription on it to record his grief (Fig. 96). At Prambanan the *aparakriyā*, or the *śrāddha* ceremony, performed for Daśaratha is clearly represented, the last of the *saṁskāras* that man receives on earth here below in this land of ours.

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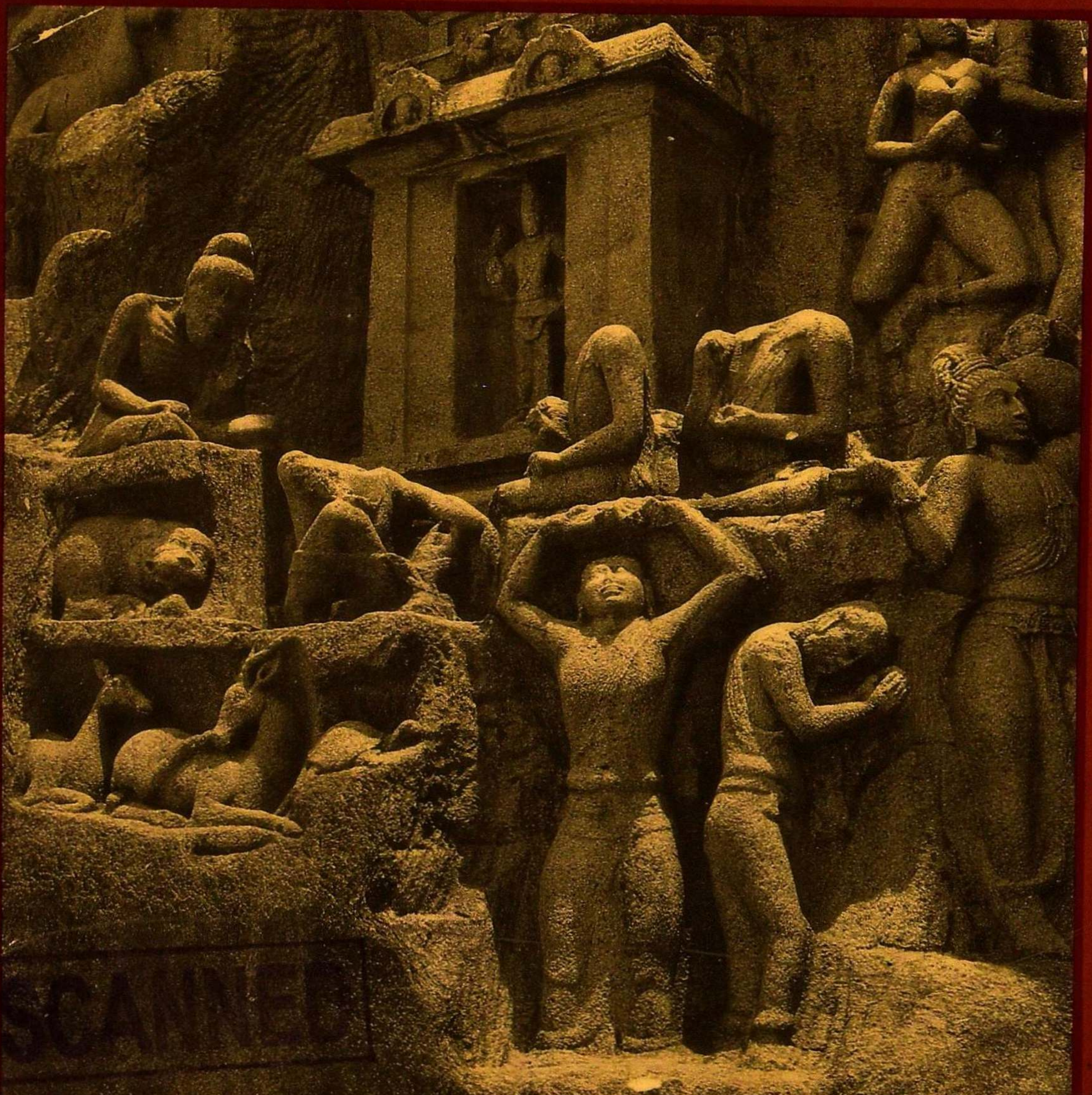

SCANNED